

AUDLEY FORTESCUE;

OR THE

VICTIMS OF FRAILTY.

A NOVEL.

BY MR. ROBINSON.



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THE HISTORY OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

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AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER I.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.—LONDON.

KEONCAER-VALE,
Merionethshire, Friday Evening.

YOU seem to forget the nature of your friend's disappointment, and the severity of that misfortune which has driven him into retirement.—You complain of my peevishness, yet pity me for giving way to it.—Ah, Frederic! have I ever told you that I could struggle against my passions, and do you know so little of Audley Fortescue as to suppose he can avail himself of the ordinary precepts of mechanical patience. “A victim to perfidy and ingratitude, I have withdrawn myself, disgusted, from society, and my only wish is to be forgotten.”—

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My

My heart may sometimes yearn towards you, as the earliest, the approved friend of my youth, but remember, Frederic, I have had more than my share of trials, and it will not be wondered at if my infirmities have increased accordingly.

When I flew into this seclusion after the ruin of my peace, and the sad sacrifice of every domestic endearment, hope followed me not with fantastic illusions, nor was I credulous enough to believe that any welcome comforts could be gleaned in retirement. I thought by abandoning the dreadful scene which teemed with an object I was once affectionately attached to, I might in time wean my mind from the fatal familiarity, and in distant melancholy exile, linger out, undisturbed, my allotted portion of existence.

The prospect at best was gloomy enough, but it was all that was left your disappointed friend!

And even into these obscure and remoter circles, though far removed from the dwellings of depravity and dissipation, poor human nature is pretty much the same in its course of frailty. I have seen
exalted



exalted affluence, when suffering distress has looked up to it for a little temporary relief, have recourse to the meanness of falsehood to excuse itself from granting the solicited pittance. I have heard a rapacious landlord enlarge on the virtues of charity and forbearance, and arrogate to himself the amicable qualities of benevolence for sparing an unfortunate tenant, when but the instant before he had been stripping the cottage of a defenceless widow, for half a year's rent.

This is at any rate a species of duplicity which is generally understood to constitute worldly policy, and shews what mankind in every stage is capable of.

You know, Frederic, I am not apt to yield to sudden prejudices, and will therefore believe that these observations are founded on the testimony of experience. Indeed I have suffered too much by the world not to watch it on every occasion with caution and suspicion.

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

KEONCAER-VALE,—*Tuesday.*

I Am not, the misanthropist you describe. I have declared no general warfare with mankind, nor is there an individual that I would seek to injure. You know, Frederic, how I have been deceived, and why I retreated from the world. I thought retirement the most salutary refuge, and I selected a spot where, unknowing and unknown, I might be sheltered from any fresh visitations of adversity. Yet, my friend, my private propensities are the same; I have still a rate ready for misfortune; I am still alive to the luxury of relieving it.

That system of philosophy, which you say great minds invariably derive consolation from, is only inapplicable to me. I consider it a spurious compound of indifference and insensibility, which in its operations must eventually be injurious; when I am lost to this exquisite sense of my misfortunes, every finer sensation must

must be worn away, and the faculties of reason and recollection suspended; I may possibly draw some little relief from the fostering hand of time, but my advances will be slow, and I shall jealously guard against every symptom of delusion.

Yet as a proof to you that I can still respect the amiable traces of private worth, I have lately suffered myself to cultivate an acquaintance with the Vicar, a venerable well-informed man, who is lately come to settle in the Vale; unaffected complacency and genuine urbanity distinguish his address and manners, and his happy brow is so faithful an index of his heart, that it is impossible to withhold from him a tribute of esteem. He leads me to the Vicarage, a tranquil mansion, consecrated to innocence and virtue, and there in a charming little society I have been taught to beguile away hours which might otherwise have been marked with their usual portion of melancholy.

No idle impulse of busy curiosity ever disturbs the calm serenity which prevails in his happy family; they have discernment enough to discover that something is amiss with me, but they study rather

to avoid the subject, than appear to be interesting themselves in the cause of my inquietude.

And but for the little variety which the hospitable Vicarage has afforded me, I should long since have drooped, a martyr to spleen and despondency. My spirits lately have been depressed, an arbitrary langour has hung over me, and I have been tempted to seek some solitary recess to indulge in unwitnessed sorrow.—Ah, Frederic! I tremble at my forebodings; I thought the virulence of destiny was nearly exhausted. If I am doomed to encounter new calamities, where am I to fly for fortitude to support me?

Adieu, bear my best remembrances to your Harriot, and think me,

Ever sincerely your's,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER III.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

LONDON,—Monday.

YOU know, my dear Audley, how affectionately I sympathize in your misfortunes,

misfortunes, and with what earnestness I have laboured to soothe the sorrows of your youth; to a mind less exquisitely susceptible, I might have administered more ordinary remedies, but I was aware of the dangers of delusion, and therefore sought out some unbeaten path, which, though difficult to explore, might at last have led to tranquillity. Happy would it have been if my friend had resisted those peculiar doctrines which were instilled into his mind at an early period, I might then have had some hope, however remote, to have softened the terrors of adversity, and by the happy aid of our divine mistress, Religion, have taught him the lesson of resignation.

One truth is too manifest even for *you* to deny,—How many millions of souls, equally enlightened as yourself, find refuge in her sanctuaries, and rise superior to every visitation of misfortune; their faith is strengthened by reason, and their comfort established by a reliance on their God!

Destitute of the power of exercising this charm, I am at a loss in what manner to administer the cordial of content,—

the lenient hand of time only can effect it. Your Frederic shares too faithfully in your distress to be insensible to its severity, nor are you and I, Audley, the only sufferers. Society feels a loss in being deprived of one of its greatest ornaments, and the friends whom you once honoured with your esteem, and whose hearts still follow you, in spite of your indifference, incessantly regret the sacrifice of such accomplishments, and that talents so splendid as Audley Fortescue's should be wasted in gloomy obscurity.

The sad reverie which has marked my unfortunate friend's destiny, affords a lesson for proud prosperity to contemplate, and proves the narrow limits of human foresight when applied to the stability of happiness. Blest with the first choice of his heart in a beautiful and accomplished wife, in an extensive fortune and the prospect and homage of an admiring world ; if fortune could not boast a shelter from adversity, who shall dare to exult in the sun-shine of the moment, or securely say he is out of the reach of misfortune?

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The forebodings you complain of will I hope only prove the gloomy attendants on temporary discussion, and subside in proportion as you encourage an inclination to cultivate a little intercourse with society. I intreat you to avail yourself of the worthy Vicar's generous overtures, and without any kind of painful retrospect, only look forward to brighter scenes.

My Harriet sends you her wishes, ever affectionate and tender, and enjoins me to say, that if you will in some measure try to be yourself again, she will prevail on me to bring her into Wales before the winter sets in. Your little god-son too, lisps the name of Audley Fortescue, and in the prattle of innocence manifests his remembrances. For myself, as I never felt the sacred inspiration of friendship until I caught it from the soul of Fortescue, why will he not make me more his debtor, and say he will yet live for me, and be happy?

Adieu,

FREDERIC NORMAN.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

TO MISS COURTNEY, AT WINDSOR.

THE ABBEY-HOUSE,

KEONCAER-VALE,—*Friday.*

MY dear Eleanor will find by the packet conveyed by Mr. Godfrey, that I have not been altogether unmindful of my promise, though to say the truth, I have had few opportunities lately of reconciling my mind to the sacred obligations of friendship. The continued bustle which disturbs these venerable walls, and which has agitated the whole fabric from top to bottom since the arrival of its new mistress, absolutely prevents every idea of retirement, and makes it appear more like the giddy mansion of a London square than an antiquated seat of seclusion in Wales.

How truly irksome to a delicate mind is the necessity of conforming to the idle prejudices of custom? for myself, who have ever been in the habit (perhaps too much so, Eleanor) of indulging uncon-

trouled

trouled my inclinations, I own I cannot but look on my fantastic sister-in-law with sentiments little short of contempt; I am sometimes charitable enough to pity her for the vain glare of empty parade with which she labours to manifest her consequence, forgetful of the humble sphere from which my brother's indiscreet passion so recently snatched her.— Do not mistake me, my dear, I am ready to admit that genuine merit may ornament and dignify any station; and believe me, I should have welcomed the object of my brother's love with the liveliest affection, and studied to have made myself worthy of her's, had innocence and the sister-virtues been her only portion.

But my jealous pen, too conscious of whom it is addressing, shrinks from the unworthy subject, and chides me for sacrificing so much time on so trifling an occasion as the character of Mrs. Legrand; it urges me to embrace the happy privilege of friendship, and the generous converse it affords me with my beloved Eleanor, nor need I tell her that an intercourse so endearing is the sovereign
solace

folace of all my little inquietudes.

The irregular beauties of a romantic country are peculiarly interesting to those who are attached to scenes of rural simplicity, and had it been my lot to have moved in a circle with souls congenial to my own, I could now have boasted of the most delicious gratifications. Naturally pensive and fond of retirement, I could here have indulged my favorite propensities and unconcernedly heard of the great world without a wish to bend to its allurements. To you, my dear, this may appear the sudden flight of a romantic imagination, but suffer me seriously to assure you that so far as it is possible to judge of our inclinations, the sober circumference of the few miles round about this Valley would comprehend all my wishes, and furnish that sort of tranquillity which I think nearest allied to contentment.

The venerable Vicar is come to settle here, and is one of those engaging characters to whom the society of young people is particularly acceptable, and it is highly gratifying to them when in an old man they discover a grateful.

grateful sense of their little attentions. I am so happy as to be a favorite with him, and knowing that I am ill at ease at my brother's, when the Abbey-House is thronged with a motley group of accommodating visitants, he kindly urges me to make his house the retreat of private hospitality. He has a niece, a charming woman, whose earliest years have been passed in a convent, in Normandy, and from a little intelligence which our growing intimacy has furnished, I am inclined to think some singular vicissitudes have chequered her destiny; certain it is, that she contrived to effect her escape after her lips had sealed the sacred vow; but she flew from the shackles of self-tormenting bigotry into the arms of an affectionate husband, and now presents an exemplary instance of virtuous and elegant endearment.—

Mr. Davenport, the happy sovereign of her affections, has been in the army, from whence he receives his half-pay, and they are, besides, dependent on Mr. Percival, the vicar, whose possessions, which are very considerable, they will undoubtedly inherit. This is our party, unless, which

is

is sometimes the case, we are honoured with the addition of a stranger———

Ah, Eleanor, in attempting to describe this stranger I find a more difficult task than ever yet fell to the lot of your friend !

In all our intercourse by letter, I am sure you will do me the justice to admit that I have dwelt as little as possible on the attractions of the other sex, and there are few characters of that description that I should do the honour to introduce into our correspondence, but were I to be silent now, it would be unpardonable neglect, and almost amount to dissimulation.

Conceive, my dear, (and give a loose to fancy on this occasion) every thing manly and elegant, amiable and engaging, and you may have some idea of Mr. Fortescue !—— further I dare not trust myself, unless it were to observe that such splendid accomplishments could never have been discovered in the obscurity of a remote village in Wales, without furnishing matter for curious speculation, had not a whisper gone forth that a tender but fatal disappointment has reconciled

ciled him to voluntary exile ; though possessed, according to report, of an affluent fortune, he resides in a plain style of domestic economy, at a respectable farm-house in the Vale. Mr. Percival met with him in his walks, and with that happy power of insinuation, that resistless grace which insensibly challenges admiration, he drew him to the Vicarage. Mr. Fortescue soon understood the disposition of his host, and could not observe with indifference the hospitality which adorned it.

Modest merit takes no pains to secure the suffrages of public applause, yet Mr. Fortescue's liberality, though exercised with stealth, is the subject of universal praise. The aged villagers never remember such a bountiful benefactor ;--- every tongue dwells with grateful energy on his virtues.

It is scarce two months since he sought out this retirement, and his reconciliation to it is evident by the extreme caution and reserve with which he conducts himself towards strangers ; his visits are confined solely to the Vicarage, and as Mr. Percival is himself particularly choice in
his

his selection of associates, Mr. Fortescue is pretty well secured from intruders.

If your friend, my dear, possessed no more than her share of female vanity, she might venture to apply some fancied merit to herself from the attention Mr. Fortescue has honoured her with ; twice has he conducted me to the Abbey-House after our evening society separated, and I thought, (surely I need not hesitate to declare it) that our footsteps were imperceptibly hastened, and that time seemed to grudge me the felicity of the moment.

Should I become acquainted with any circumstance that may lead to a discovery of the story of this singular recluse, I shall certainly introduce them into my letters, though from the present appearance of things, and considering Mr. Fortescue's peculiar reserve, I think it rather unlikely.

Remember me, in terms the most welcome and endearing to your excellent mother and dear Mrs. Godfrey, whose inestimable value my heart has sensibly felt since our separating. Accept my love,
Elean-

AUDLEY FORTESCUE. 19

Eleanor, and that I may ever be blest
with all your affections is the constant
prayer of

Your

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER V.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

KLONCAKE-VALE, — *Midnight!*

IT is but too true, Frederic, that the
langour which lately hung over me,
foreboded some remarkable vicissitude in
the history of your unfortunate friend.

I have an interesting incident to relate,
but my mind is so dreadfully agitated
that I have scarcely power to hold my
pen.

Yet if I court repose on my pillow, I
know too well what wakeful reflections
will arrest my lingering hours.

My letters are very imperfect, but they
are sacred to the review of partial friend-
ship.

The

The former part of this evening was remarkably pleasant and serene, and I was insensibly led to ramble a considerable distance from home. My favorite friends at the vicarage did not assemble, and a forlorn wanderer, I sought a temporary amusement in my accustomed sequestration amongst woods and wilds.—It was almost dark when I reached the Vale, and Mrs. Lewis, receiving me at the door, significantly beckoned me to follow her into the common sitting room. I had been in the habit of familiarizing myself to their domestic manners, and therefore unconcernedly, went after her; but when on entering the room, I observed her shutting the door with unusual preciseness, it alarmed me. “Sit down, my good Sir,” said she, “I have been upon the watch for you these three hours,—there’s a stranger in the blue parlor, who I am sure must have come a long way to see you, for he seems sadly disordered.” “To see *me*, Mrs. Lewis,—’tis certainly some mistake.” “He asked very particularly for ’Squire Fortescue, and would have come out to meet you, but I could not tell him for certain
which

which way you would return.—I sent down to the vicarage but could hear nothing of you there.” Agitated as I was at first, it presently occurred to me that you had sent some person with dispatches on the ——— business, and I withdrew, composed enough into the other parlor. There sat an elegant young man, who on my entrance arose and saluted me respectfully; I returned his address, and he was apologizing for intruding on my retirement, when Mrs. Lewis sent in candles. The instant the light met his countenance, the features of his face were familiar to me, and I started to see before me a striking counterpart of the fallen CAROLINE! —the youth perceived my agitation—“My name, Sir,” said he, “is Osborne, and happy should I have thought myself, had not this first interview with Mr. Fortescue forced a blush into the conscious cheek of a soldier.” “To what circumstance, Mr. Osborne, am I to ascribe the honor of this visit at a time so unexpected, and at a place so unlikely.” “I hear a sister, Sir, whom at my departure from England to America, some few years since,

since, I left flourishing in innocence and prosperity; that this sister afterwards became the wife of Mr. Fortescue, I must have been proud to discover—that she is now, deservedly, a discarded victim to infidelity and shame; I am sure you would willingly spare her brother the anguish of acknowledging.”

A tear started on his cheek—he turned aside his face, and hid it in his handkerchief.

You know, Frederic, I have a softness in my nature which is sure to give way when my feelings are interested.

“Mr. Fortescue,” resumed the youth, “I am not come to extenuate my unhappy sister’s errors, but I may be suffered to plead the affliction of a brother for interesting myself in her behalf more earnestly than the common cause of humanity requires; and when I tell you, Sir, that she has but a few hours to live, and that she has intreated me to bear one request to you as her last appeal, you will at least pity the wretched sufferer: guilty she has been, but if the sincerest contrition can entitle her to compassion, she may put in her melancholy claim.

The

The sense of her disgrace, and the wrongs she has done the most affectionate of husbands, has planted a thorn in her heart, which death only can remove:— Yet 'ere the unfortunate victim closes her miserable existence,—'ere she bids adieu to a world from which she is prematurely hurried, she languishes for her injured husband's forgiveness;—on this occasion, Sir, and for this important purpose I am come, surely the privileges of weeping penitence will extend to this humble consolation.

In attempting to reply, though I really knew not what to say, I found my speech faltering. — I paused, and there was a gloomy interval of silence.

At length Mr. Osborne proceeded :

“ This ill-fated sister of mine is now at Bristol Hot-wells, lingering on her bed of death, and in momentary expectation of her final summons; nor do I think it possible for me to return time enough to be the messenger of any comfortable tidings.”

I arose from my chair and taking a few turns across the room, during which I discovered in the poor youth's countenance

tenance every symptom of lively anxiety; I began some awkward kind of apology for the confusion I had been surprized into, and intreated him to give me leave to order him some refreshment.

"You are extremely good, Mr. Fortescue; but I am indifferent as to any refreshment, although for these three days past I have been a stranger to repose, but all my pains will be abundantly requited if my melancholy mediation is at last successful."

"In this distant and remote recess, the scene of gloomy retirement, you have found me, Mr. Osborne, self exiled from the world, and weary of an existence for ever embittered by your sister's misconduct; but I ought to spare you, Sir, and myself indeed, the recital of ills which can have no other effect now than to tear open the wounds of a bosom still bleeding and fore.—Ah, Mr. Osborne! you know not how tenderly I loved her!"

"Yes, Mr. Fortescue, the unhappy sufferer has with fatal fidelity unbosomed the story of her shame, and I know how you have been injured; but Caroline, though fallen from what she was, is still
my

my sister!---My dying parents bequeathed her a precious charge to me, and when I embraced a military life, and the regiment in which I was but an ensign, was ordered abroad; I transferred the trust to our Aunt Melcombe.---She was indeed a parent to her, and felt all a parent's anguish at her disgrace:---But Caroline has an accomplice in her guilt whom I will pursue—I am informed the villain flew abroad soon after the verdict in your favor, where he thinks to elude the grasp of justice; he may do so for a time, but if the world contains the miscreant, my sister's wrongs shall be revenged.”

The determined ardor which the young foldier discovered on this occasion, together with the honest ingenuousness of his manner, prepossessed me strongly in his favour. Alas, I knew not, Frederic, that the unhappy wanderer had preserved one friend whom she could cling to in the wreck of her fame and fortune.

“In empowering you, Mr. Osborne, to return with comfort to an unhappy sister and a wretched wife, I know I shall be rewarding the affectionate zeal of a worthy brother, whose exertions on such

an occasion certainly do honor to his humanity; but you may judge of the HUSBAND'S feelings at this moment, when he tells you to bear to the unfortunate sufferer, in whatever manner you think most likely to answer your generous purpose, this testimony of my forgiveness, (giving him my hand.) You may also tell her that I yielded a tear to the recital of her afflictions; that I have never thought of her, but pity has softened resentment, and that even now, suffering as I am for her, if she will instruct me how to soothe the anguish of her soul, or calm the terrors of her approaching dissolution, tell her, Mr. Osborne, I am FORTESCUE still!"

Whether my manner of delivering myself was singularly pathetic, (for I felt a moisture on my cheek) or from any other cause I know not, but the soldier was again overpowered, and throwing himself on a chair, gave a loose to the emotions of affection.

Whilst the glistening drop of gratitude started in his eye, he came up to me,——

" Mr,

“ Mr. Fortescue is exactly the character my wretched sister represented to me ;--I think I might envy you, Sir, the triumph of this moment ;--I was not, I own, sufficiently sensible of the weakness of the cause I had engaged in, until this proof of your unexampled generosity ;--I have no language equal to the fullness of my feelings, and I ought to fly to the expiring penitent with these happy, these unlooked for tidings. Yet, Mr. Fortescue, invited by your advances, I will venture one step further ;---possibly the heart that can so readily yield to an unconditional forgiveness of injuries may hereafter derive some consolation, worthy only of itself, in reflecting that the ill-fated girl who is inevitably consigned to an early grave, was not altogether so criminal as she seemed ; that her penitence was exemplarily sincere, and that her last moments expressed a due sense of her injured husband's generosity and virtues. And oh, Mr. Fortescue, can this be more satisfactorily ascertained than by yourself becoming a witness to her dying words ? Caroline, confiding in the liberality of your nature, thought such an indul-

gence might be within her reach:—The laws of honor are rigid, but they sometimes yield to the milder principles of humanity; if you can prevail on yourself to see her once more, the journey is not so far, but we can contrive to accomplish it in the course of a day.”

This was the moment to signalize the triumph of humanity—I own I felt the fullen dignity of tenacious honor, but I also felt the superior ascendancy of the softer virtues, and whilst the former gave way, pity and tenderness rushed forwards, and all that remained of resentment was instantly disarmed.

I now exerted an authority over my guest to insist on his taking some refreshment, so as to furnish him with a fresh recruit of spirits to enable him to accompany me on the morrow---I have ordered a chaise to be in readiness at day-break. The time draws near, and 'ere this letter reaches you, I shall hang over the expiring penitent---the wife that was once so dear to Fortescue. Ah! Frederic, if by affording this little tribute to the remembrance of our past loves, our once happy chastene endearments, I can soothe

soothe her parting moments, and secure her a gleam of tranquillity, what have I to dread from the severity of those who shall be cruel enough to reprobate the deed?

I shall write from Bristol—you will drop me a line to the Post-Office at the Wells; but, my friend, say nothing if you find it necessary to condemn me?

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

P. S. Osborne had been up to London, and by an ingenious device drew my address from the agent in——

LETTER VI.

TO MISS JULIA LEGRAND.

WINDSOR.—*Thursday.*

AN abundance of thanks are due to you, my dear, for your last, which, believe me, I have taken good care to preserve, as the most curious original that ever passed between two

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friends

friends in the private annals of letter-writing.

Such a mighty pretty strain of melting romance—such a feast for languishing maids to feed their romantic fancies on, my sober senses were never before liable to be run away with.

All hail ye first blessed fruits of this Welch expedition !

Julia Legrand has told her friend (and really seemed to be in earnest) that she is naturally pensive and fond of retirement.

Then pray my dear, what is become of a certain giddy madcap companion of mine, that two or three months ago was the leader of all mischievous exploits, and never had a moment to sacrifice to sentiment? Where is she, that with a happy artillery of charming raillery, was wont to put the whole of the dangling tribe out of countenance, and set them altogether by the ears in delightful confusion?—Ah me, what a wonderful revolution!—this lively little associate of mine has got herself transported into an unknown region, and is become metamorphosed into a grave matron, that
thinks

thinks herself qualified to inculcate sober and moral principles into the giddy minds of retrograde misses. And how has all this happened?---A certain hair-brained stranger whom nobody knows, and for whom, I dare say, nobody cares, just emancipated from the clutches of the moon, who occasionally is troubled with the government of him, has crept out of his hiding place, and stumbled across my Julia. She, poor thing, too easy and too good-natured to suspect him of mischief, inadvertently gives him credit for the pretty dying tale he has fabricated to impose on her sensibility, and away she sends it to her faithful correspondent Eleanor---a delightfully whimsical scheme this of your headstrong brother and your empty sister-in-law, to insist on your taking a journey to the lord knows where, to have your reason insulted, and your head filled with phantoms of sentiment and romance!

I am now going to be serious, Julia, and remember I do positively insist, that, on sight hereof, you resolve to take leave (*French leave*) of that moaping vale, and

to transplant yourself to a soil more congenial with your nature.

Leave to itself that pining figure of misery and despair, and depend upon it he is now undergoing a merited penance for some violations, which the men with insulting levity distinguish by the name of modern gallantry, but which may with more propriety be called an unmanly triumph over innocence and credulity.

Ah, Julia, when you have a sigh to spare for disappointed love, bestow it on your own sex, let the male creatures take care of themselves!

I have Mrs. Godfrey's description of that ugly Abbey-House forever uppermost in my mind, and I am satisfied that 'tis some crazy old structure that has been haunted time out of mind. Ugh—h—h—I shudder to think what mischiefs has been perpetrated within its guilty walls. Murders and assassinations in every corner!—Pray, my dear, is not the ancient armour stuck about the hall at the entrance lined with a mouldering skeleton (doubtless in high preservation) and a curious selection of gaping beavers and helmets arranged in all the horrors

rors of dismal regularity? And have you never, Julia, intercepted any of the flitting apparitions which at midnight-hour are wont to whisk through the hollow chambers?—then by way of establishing the solemnity of the scene, to be sure you have seen the battlements nod, the turrets yawn, and have heard the rooks and ravens mingle their engaging melody—nor be the subterranean passages, which lead to the mansions of the dead forgotten!—the massy door, which has for ages resisted human art to open, faithfully guarding the apartment where some sleeping princess lingers under the influence of enchantment—these and a thousand terrible things constantly disturb the devoted inmates of such gloomy sepulchres. Ah fly, my Julia, from such doleful scenes, and come to Windsor, where snug with your Eleanor, you shall securely smile at the horrors which hung over you in that frightful dungeon.

Positively, my dear, unless you come by fair means willingly and complacently, I will be concerned in a conspiracy to force you away. One word more with you—does my friend sleep alone, and is

there not over her head some antiquated moth-eaten remnant of yellow canvass that might in days of yore have been yclept tapestry—and are the gothic casements of her chamber marked with no inscriptions, no melancholy ditty to denote who has died there after a long and solitary confinement?

A summons from Mama, who has been mighty cross these three weeks about Edward. In good truth, ill-nature seems to be on a visit at our house, and to meet with a tolerable share of encouragement—I am in a sad peevish humour—but I love my Julia, and will with fidelity assure her that we have all nearly and dearly her interest at heart; so adieu my best girl, and remember that as to the point in question I am determined, one word therefore is as good as a thousand!

Ever your's,

ELEANOR COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

BRISTOL HOT-WELLS.

(Till call'd for at the Post-Office.)

LONDON, — Wednesday.

I Approve highly of your resolution in not consulting any one on the subject of your last---on occasions of such a nature the heart is the best and safest monitor, and the uniform goodness of Audley Fortescue's is at all times a security for its rectitude.

The affectionate zeal with which poor Osborne pleaded for his unfortunate sister does him infinite honor, and entitles him to the approbation of every benevolent mind. I can feel for the disappointment of a fond brother, and you know, Audley, I have never lost sight of the pity due to the misguided frail one !

You are also aware that the regular morality of my principles will on all occasions induce me rather to check than

to

to encourage that vindictive spirit with which Mr. Osborne seems determined to pursue the villain Dutton; but on a review of the peculiar circumstances of this case, and feeling as I have done the magnitude of the injury, I cannot say that I am inclined to interfere. I think such a miscreant ought to be hunted from society, and yet the same argument that I formerly made use of, certainly applies with equal force, to Mr. Osborne as to yourself. I should invariably protest against the equality of a risque where the life of an unprincipled villain is set in competition with an innocent and injured man, and I think if honor is ever called in question to give a momentary sanction to duelling, it can only be amongst men of refined principles, not with the rascally outcasts of the creation.

This letter will meet you at the Hot-Wells; it were needless for me to say that I am anxious to hear from you, because it would sound like the formality of an injunction, which my friend's punctuality has ever rendered unnecessary.—My Harriet greets you
with

with every friendly remembrance, and
so does

Your sincere

FREDERIC NORMAN.

L E T T E R VIII.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.—LONDON.

FOREMAN'S HOTEL,

BRISTOL HOT-WELLS.—*Friday Night.*

IT is over!—the unfortunate offender is no more!—her sufferings have expiated her indiscretions, and an early grave shelters the devoted victim. I witnessed the sad close of her wretched existence, and marked the triumph of penitence and pity over guilt and error. I held her faded hand whilst the current of life was languidly retreating, and saw her dying eyes fix on her injured Fortescue.

Ah, Frederic, not for ten thousand worlds would I have resisted her last petition—you, even *you*, will have cause for exultation.

I feel

I feel a load removing from my breast, and something like a calm settling in my mind—my passions are less violent—this change has operated like the power of electricity—the shock was severe, but 'tis over, and I am easier. Yet I have waded through a melancholy scene—the remembrance wounds every faculty of my soul, but I will endeavour to be circumstantial in my narrative.

Our journey from the Vale was remarkable for nothing but the rapidity with which we travelled, and very little passed between my companion and me but what related to the subject of our expedition—sadly depressed by the misfortunes of a sister, whom it was evident was dear to him, young Osborne heaved many a sigh, the involuntary tribute of generous affection; but when he mentioned the villain that deluded her from innocence and happiness, a variety of passions convulsed him—his eyes glistened with rage, and his soul seemed bursting with violent revenge, nor did I seek to dissuade him from his purpose.—You Norman, seem reluctant to interfere, but what must be the feelings of an injured

jured husband—what propensity does honest nature yield to revenge such unparalleled villainy.

We arrived at the Hot-Wells early in the evening, and Mr. Osborne leaving me at the hotel, went to prepare his sister for the awful interview: he was absent upwards of an hour, which I passed in a state of anxious suspense hardly to be described, and when he returned, my inquisitive eyes betrayed the impatience I had expected him with. “We are yet in good time, Mr. Fortescue—the unfortunate object of our humanity is still sensible and collected—when I entered her chamber,” continued he, “she snatched aside the curtains, and in a faint voice, tho’ evidently a strong exertion, called out,” “Brother—what an age since you left me,—my foreboding heart tells me “your generous labor has been in vain. “Mercy extends not to offences like “mine.” I entreated her,” said Mr. Osborne, “to endeavour to compose herself and she should presently find I had tidings to communicate to her of the most welcome nature.”—“Still,” said she, “the same generous Fortescue,”—
 “Yes,

"Yes, my sister, Mr. Fortescue is a
 "character to which distress can never
 "look up in vain. I have seen him,—
 "I have seen the most exalted humanity
 "elevate his conduct—and Caroline may
 "now sink into the softest slumber of
 "tranquility if her husband's forgiveness
 "and compassion can lull her into peace
 "—take comfort then from the reflexion
 "that in the forsaken husband you have
 "found a sympathetic friend; and re-
 "member, sister, the importance of such
 "an acquisition at a crisis like this."—
 "Ah, brother," said she, "I anticipate
 "something more—for pity's sake re-
 "lieve me from suspense—I feel my
 "moment hastily approaching, and the
 "feeble powers of expiring life are easily
 "overcome." ——— "An appeal so
 earnest," said Mr. Osborne, "I could
 no longer resist, and I unreservedly told
 her all—in what melancholy seclusion I
 found you, and with what generous
 promptitude you accompanied me from
 Wales, purposely to see her final
 moments; and now," continued Mr.
 Osborne, "her agitation was nearly
 overpowering her—she was so affected
 that

that I despaired of reconciling her to the interview, which but a little before had been the most serious object of her wishes, but at length heaving a deep sigh, she suddenly cried out, "let him come—" "I have conquered my womanish weaknesses—be hasty my brother, for I know not how long my resolution may support me."

From this conclusion of Mr. Osborne's report, I was unwilling to lose a moment, and therefore taking hold of his arm, I suffered him to conduct me to a house in the corner of the Square, where in a chamber, on the second-floor, on an indifferent bed, curtained with red check furniture, lay the wretched wreck of Caroline's fatal beauty. We had ascended the stairs as softly as possible, and Mr. Osborne previously entering, dismissed an attendant and ushered me in.—"Caroline, Mr. Fortescue is here."—I sat down on the bed-side, and taking her almost inanimate hand, I spoke not, but bore it trembling to my lips.—Oh, Norman, what a picture of horror presented itself!—her beautiful visage, lengthened and deformed by sorrow and sickness.

sickness, scarce retained a vestige of what it once was---her fine eyes, sunk inwards, were dimly glazed over---her lips were livid and parched---her cheeks, which once rivalled the freshest rose, now wore a faint death-like paleness, as if the grim-tyrant was already possessed of his victim. ---Yet the last time I saw her, when with a happy husband's fond attention, I led her to the villain's phaeton, unsuspecting of the dreadful sacrifice that moment teemed with, what grace dignified her form, what lustre darted from her eyes, what emanations of beauty beamed from her angel-countenance!---Forgive this rhapsody, Frederic, I am writing to a friend, who knows my weakness and who knew my fondness!

No sooner had I printed an affectionate kiss on her hand, than turning her face from me, she hid it under the bed-clothes, exclaiming, "O God, this is too much"---but almost immediately recovering herself she looked on me---
 "My once-loved injured Fortescue, is it
 "you, or is it a phantom to remind me
 "of my fall, and warn me of approach.
 "ing

“ing death?---Brother, are *you* there---
 “is this Mr. Fortescue, and will he for-
 “give Caroline”---(and the big drops
 rolled down her pallid cheeks) “Come,
 Audley, and let me claim my turn to
 embrace that dear hand---it once gave
 me the pressure of affection.” I held it
 out to her, and she hugged it to her bo-
 som, my other resting on my knee, was
 applying my handkerchief to my eyes,
 which gushed with a shower of tears.

When the violence of our emotions
 had a little subsided, I spoke ---“ Caro-
 “line, does not this look as if some re-
 “mains of tenderness still clung about
 “my heart---alas, to see you thus, re-
 “vives the expiring embers of affection
 “---they were not quite extinguished
 “when your brother found me. You
 “have heard where he found me, and
 “may judge what I have suffered---but
 “I forgive and will forget it all---and
 “here in the face of Heaven, I solemnly
 “abjure you from every offence com-
 “mitted towards me, and hope that God
 “who now looks down upon you, will
 “receive you as an unhappy misled re-
 “pentant

"pentant wanderer, over whom he has
 "promised to rejoice." *

"My fall," said she, when a little
 collected, "was preconcerted by infalli-
 "ble stratagems, and I could not save
 "myself--guilt fastened on me 'ere I
 "was aware of its enormity, and when I
 "became a victim to frailty 'twas the
 "result of a deliberated system of seduc-
 "tion to which every circumstance fa-
 "tally conspired--no common means
 "could have succeeded; but I have not
 "power to attempt an explanation here;
 "read in this letter the sad but faithful
 "narrative!--had I been taken from life
 "without the melancholy consolation of
 "this interview, I should have left it be-
 "hind me as the last means of rescuing
 "my memory from that weight of ob-
 "loquy which is ever attached to indis-
 "cretions like mine---I commit it to
 "your hands. And, oh, Mr. Fortes-

* We are at a loss how to reconcile this passage
 in Mr. Fortescue's letter with the charge his friend
 Norman made on a former occasion (see page 9)
 which seemed to imply something in Mr. Fortes-
 cue's conduct rather unfavourable to the principles
 of religion.

"cue,

"cue, our little infant---does it yet live?
 "and is it blest with a father's affection?
 "when that child was born, innocence
 "and happiness were mine---may it
 "make you amends for its unfortunate
 "mother's misdeeds! I could have
 "wished for one last kiss---nature pulls,
 "but indeed I am too extravagant in my
 "desires."

Exhausted with speaking, she now
 sunk backwards, and remained for a mi-
 nute or two apparently lifeless, but once
 more opening her languid eyes, she in-
 wardly articulated a few incoherent sen-
 tences, chiefly applied to the subject of
 her infant, and then looking about her as
 if having suddenly recollected herself,
 she fixed her eyes earnestly at me, and
 seemed laboring to express herself---but
 I entreated her to forbear, and dwell no
 longer on misfortunes which were be-
 yond a remedy---I assured her my visit
 was directed to afford her every possible
 consolation, and not revive the painful
 remembrance of past ills---and oh, Fre-
 deric, I told her if it were likely that
 some change might take place, I would
 give her an opportunity to prove that
 one

one false step might be retrieved---but this was touching the chord that instantly vibrated thro' her feeble frame, and she stopt me. --- "Ah, Fortescue, never, " never---generous you are, and I am " indebted, unworthily, I know, to your " pity for this indulgent condescension--- " there is the limit of my very hope, nor " has life a wish beyond it---but if I had " not the strongest conviction that this is " the last stage of my ill-directed journey, I dared not have sued to you.--- " My soul welcomes death as an asylum " from the bitter consciousness of guilt, " and unless I could bring back to your " arms that innocence I have sacrificed, " the world has not a charm that could " reconcile me to it a moment."

I dreaded the effects of such violent exertions at a crisis so alarming, and having conjured her with the most affectionate tenderness to struggle yet a little longer against the tyranny of misfortune, and to look forward to the fruits of a victory---I recommended to her to take some repose for the night, and to prepare to receive me in the morning.

I have

I have omitted introducing the unhappy brother into this melancholy picture, for to say the truth, I am at a loss for language to describe his distress.

Returning to the hotel, I importuned Mr. Osborne to pass the evening with me, judging it adviseable to let the expiring sufferer have every opportunity of composing herself.

Early the next morning, he repaired to his sister's chamber, from whence he came into mine, and informed me she had passed the night tolerably tranquil, and waited her change in perfect resignation.

And oh, Frederic, never was dying penitence distinguished with more fervent, more exemplary piety!

I had two interviews afterwards with her, yesterday and this evening.

In passing through the hall this afternoon, I was met by the physician, who desired permission to have a few minutes conversation with me in the parlor. "You seem, Sir," said he, "affectionately interested in the case of the young lady above, and you will excuse my observing that I suspect some mental

tal complaint to have hurried on this fatal crisis---be that as it may, she cannot survive many hours. I have done all I could for her, but the malady was too far gone, and has baffled every art---at present I believe she is dozing, and I am inclined to think it most likely she will go off so ; unless, therefore, you have any particular wish to see her, or any thing to communicate that may be of importance, I would rather recommend it to you not to disturb her." I had assured the worthy doctor of my ready acquiescence, and how earnestly I wished her to have every possible opportunity of being composed, when a servant on the stairs called out to the people of the house to dispatch a messenger for Mr. Fortescue---I answered the call, and was informed that the dying lady had expressed a desire to see me. I flew up stairs, and found the fainting victim nearly gone. She was scarce able to speak, but beckoned me to come near her, and fixing her half-closed eyes on me, in imperfect sentences she spoke--
 "Fortescue---I go---some happier girl
 "may bless you yet, in whose arms you
 "will

“will forget your unhappy Caroline.” She made a faint effort to bear my hand once more to her lips, but failing, it dropt on her bosom, and with an unfinished sigh she expired.

Thus fell Caroline Fortescue, prematurely cut off at the early age of twenty-one, a fatal sacrifice to infidelity and dishonor! nor will it avail now that she once moved the chaste representative of purity and virtue, and shone in the circles of superior splendor. Alas, the sad moment that witnessed her fall from innocence, saw her plunging into misery and wretchedness, that only terminated with her existence!

I have perused the manuscript her dying hands committed to me, and I shall take an opportunity to transcribe so as to inclose it in my next. It comprises a recital of her sufferings since her elopement, and shews into what complicated calamities such misconduct hurries the deluded frail ones.—Oh, may Caroline be the last on the sad list of guilty victims, and no future husband endure what has embittered the fate of Fortescue!

C

I shall

I shall only stay here until the funeral is over, which I will take care to have in every respect suitable to the wife of your friend. I have forgiven her, and am not ashamed of this tribute of a tear to her memory. In the cold tomb then, rest unfortunate girl, and accursed be the tongue, that prompted by malice, or dictated by scandal, shall uncharitably retrace errors for which thou hast amply expiated!

Adieu, your's,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER IX.

TO MISS COURTNEY, AT WINDSOR.

THE ABBEY-HOUSE.—*Tuesday.*

I WAS prepared for your raillery, my dear Eleanor, and knew very well your sprightly nature would find something to amuse itself with, even though it should be a little expensive to your friend.

Con-

Convinced of the sincerity of your affection for me, and mistrustful of my own capability to form a competent judgment of things, I know that I ought to listen to your admonitions, and place them to the account of disinterested zeal; but when, setting aside the gentler offices of friendship, you have recourse to artificial means to carry a favorite point, forgive me, if without meaning to shew a spirit of perverseness, I take the liberty of remonstrating.

Generally successful in all your undertakings, Eleanor, I own I wonder you should on this occasion have so widely mistaken your ground, for believe me it will appear that the frightful images you so industriously endeavour to conjure up in my mind, are the very instruments of your defeat. Unluckily I love to traverse gloomy halls and hollow-sounding chambers. I gaze in silent admiration on the venerable remnants of antiquity which ornament the mouldering pillars. I survey with awful attention the glittering armour and its sacred appendages, regardless of the skeleton within, and so far from shrinking at the idea of a fitting

form, I declare I would sit up all night to see one. The cawing of the rooks and the solitary scream of the night-bird never discompose me, nor does the heavy flapping of the raven's wing occasion one unpleasant sensation—the turrets and battlements impress me with an idea of ancient grandeur sinking to decay, and the deep-toned bell reverberating through the sounding avenues, stamps a solemnity on the scene equally awful and sublime.

So much then for the effect of my friend's first experiment.

Nor is she more happy in her second attempt in loading the innocent unoffending stranger with such an unmerciful weight of invective and abuse. Ah, my dear, Fortescue is invulnerable to these feeble attacks—he ranks not with the worthless insensibles who merit the contempt and ridicule of our sex. Shielded with conscious integrity, and elevated by the dignity of an exalted mind, he looks with contempt on the little arts of vulgar prejudice, and smiles at its weak endeavours to tarnish his unsullied fame.

But

But here possibly you will take occasion to triumph, since (with real regret I tell it) Mr. Fortescue has left the Vale and is gone no one knows whither. A stranger who arrived here express, the preceding evening, hurried him away yesterday morning, and we are as much at a loss to conjecture the cause of his departure as to judge of the probability of his ever returning.

And now, Eleanor, having gratified a little feminine whim in striving to convince you that I was not to be frightened away, I proceed to inform you that in my next letter you may expect to find a voluntary consent under my own hand to embrace the friendly refuge you offer me, and I shall then necessarily take a long, and perhaps a last farewell of these delightful scenes. Ah, my dear, the heart will yearn to a favorite spot, was it only from a principle of gratitude for the pleasure it has known there !

Love to all friends,

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER X.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

BRISTOL HOT-WEELS.

THE final scene is closed, and the last worldly honors are paid to all that remained of the once lovely Caroline. The funeral was conducted with an appearance of elegant simplicity without any distinguishing pomp of gawdy pageantry. One mourning coach which contained Mr. Osborne and myself, followed the hearse to Bristol, where, in a vault belonging to ——— church, we deposited our melancholy charge.

The engaging manners of this very amiable young man have very much endeared him to me, and from an attachment of real friendship and sincere esteem I importuned him to return with me into Wales, but his own private affairs, he informed me, rendered his attendance in London indispensable at this crisis, and so soon as he has adjusted them, he intends setting off for the German
man

man Spa, where it seems Dutton is at present, attached to all the gayer circles of fashionable dissipation.

I have given the lieutenant a letter to Lord———, to whom I have earnestly recommended him, and he takes his leave of me early in the morning.

Inclosed is a copy of Caroline's narrative—let your next be addressed as usual to the Vale—I leave Bristol at noon to-morrow.

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER *.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

WHEN the hand that inscribes these imperfect characters shall be cold, and the heart which now but faintly throbs, shall beat no more, when

* Mr. Osborne had this letter with him to deliver to Mr. Fortescue at his first interview with him in the Vale, but finding him so readily reconciled to seeing his lady, he rather chose to give the unfortunate sufferer a chance of presenting it to him herself.

the period of Caroline's offences is closed, and charity bestows a tear on her grave, the bosom of *him* to whom this last appeal is made, may perhaps relax the severity of its resentment, and whilst the sterner voice of justice is hushed by humanity, Audley Fortescue may indulgently listen to the momentary whisper of expiring tenderness.

Cut off from every attachment to life, and drooping betimes into an early grave, my last consolation in this world depends on the accomplishment of one hope, and if he, whom next to my God, I have most offended, will extend to me his pardon and pity, when he shall be convinced that it was sued for under all the agonies of bitter but fervent repentance, I will leave him the melancholy satisfaction of having soothed my distracted mind, and softened the anguish that is sure to attend the consciousness of guilt like mine.

I am writing, Mr. Fortescue, from that bed from which it is next to impossible I should ever rise more. And the only friend I have left, witnesses and will vouch for, the sincerity of my contrition ---that friend is my brother, whom I
have

have but lately found---Providence saw me destitute, and directed him to my relief---he forgot my error in my misfortunes, and with a godlike sincerity came ---pitied---and succoured me.

But for his aid I must have perished---want and wretchedness had nearly overpowered me, when he appeared like my guardian angel, and rushed between me and destruction.

The indiscretions of his unfortunate sister have fixed a stain on a family, not distinguished for affluence, but until I disgraced it, free from a speck of dishonor---and three years since, had it been prophetically whispered to him that Caroline was to fall, he would have thought no hazard too great, no pledge too precious to have risked as security for her integrity—but disappointed as he is, he forgives me, and has promised to intercede with the most injured of men to do the same. He will himself commit this letter into your hands, as my earnest dying request, unless (which I fear is very unlikely) he should be successful in his enquiries after you, and you should be prevailed on once more to see,

in order personally to assure of your forgiveness, the unworthy girl that has dishonoured you.

I hope and believe I possess as much common charity in my nature as most of my sex, particularly in extending forgiveness for injuries ; but I solemnly declare I want power in my present state of mind, to forgive the villain that deluded and betrayed me---altho' I own I have on my knees conjured my brother to abandon every idea of revenge, and leave to Heaven the cause of the unhappy victim to his perfidy.



The admiring world had incessantly offered me such flattering tributes of homage and applause, that it will not be wondered if a female mind felt itself too lavishly supplied with ingredients for vanity. I was then scarcely eighteen, and to say that I was unconscious of my personal attractions, or that I felt not some secret delight in extending my empire of admiration, would be departing from that sincerity which this awful crisis de-

demands.—It is a frailty that in unmarried women sooner or later leads into alarming embarrassments, but fatal indeed are its consequences when it interferes with the nuptial vow, and deludes a wife from that honourable duty she owes to the lord of her affections, and to him alone.

Mr. Dutton was too well skilled in the science of gallantry, and too resolutely determined to accomplish his designs, to fail improving every symptom of my weakness to his advantage. The many opportunities your generous unsuspicious nature afforded him of being alone with me, and of attending me in my morning airings, all conspired to facilitate his infamous advances. I own I listened when I ought to have shrunk from them.

Yet suffer me solemnly to protest that at the moment I left my home, that fatal evening, an elopement was foreign to my thoughts—such a measure had never been suggested by the traitor, nor was I in any manner aware that he had planned any scheme to ensnare me.

After having rode a great way, the day began to wear, and I expressed a wish

to

to return, lest it should be late before we reached —————. Mr. Dutton seemed most readily to acquiesce, but observed that he could turn better in the town, which was only half a mile forwards: this perfectly satisfied me, but we had not gone many yards further before the pole of the carriage suddenly snapt (which I have since discovered was a concerted matter) and we were under the necessity of walking the remainder of the way to the town where it was to be repaired. Here we took some refreshments, but finding the people dilatory, and that the evening was advancing rapidly, I grew impatient, and earnestly intreated Mr. Dutton, on no account, to suffer a moment to be lost. He went out several times, and coming back, assured me that every thing would soon be ready, but at length a servant came in and informed us that it would by no means be prudent for us to venture home in the phaeton in the dark, as the pole had been splintered before, but that luckily a post-chaise was in the inn-yard, which if Mr. Dutton pleased he might have his horses put to, and set off immediately;

mediately: this seemed so probable and consistent, that I felt no sort of alarm whatever, and when the chaise drew up, I got into it with all the composure imaginable.

It soon grew very dark, and I found we were in a rough cross-country road, which I had no recollection of having passed before, and I expressed some uneasiness—but on interrogating Mr. Dutton more closely, I thought he began to prevaricate, and to betray some symptoms of confusion—nor was it long before the villain discovered himself, and assailed me with a profusion of the most violent caresses—judging by my silence, which really proceeded from the astonishment I was in, that I was not discouraging him, he began by a torrent of rhetoric to vindicate the measures he had taken to get me in his power, and strove, by every argument that the most consummate subtlety could devise, to reconcile me to his guilty proposals—you he represented as a faithless and base deceiver, solemnly protesting and calling on Heaven to witness the fact—that to his knowledge you had women in different
parts

parts of London devoted to your pleasures---that your fortune was impaired, and that the evil day, which teemed with a dreadful discovery, was at no great distance---that you had a scheme in contemplation (and which was very near ripe) of decoying me into France, in order to fix me in a convent (which at the moment recalled to my mind the indulgent proposition you had lately made to me of taking an excursion to the Continent, for the benefit of my health, but which under circumstances of immediate prejudice, I was weak enough *then* to interpret unfavourably)---in short, by these and a thousand insinuations equally fraudulent and deceptive, he labored to impress my mind with a sense of your unworthiness---nor was the letter forgotten---that mysterious letter which you well remember to have received with such violent agitation,* and which you seemed so artfully and earnestly to evade any enquiry into, he placed all to the score of guilt, and if I did not implicitly believe him---I cannot say but that I rather doubted.

At

* It does not appear what the lady alludes to.

At last we arrived and stopped at a solitary inn on the skirt of a dreary common, which a faint gleam of the moon presented to view, and Mr. Dutton, proposing to alight as it was then very late, pledged himself with the most solemn asseverations that it was the farthest from his intentions to attempt the least violation of delicacy--that his love for me was unbounded, but at the same time it was hallowed with a reverence and respect which must always secure me from any trespass that was likely to result from ungovernable passion.

Thus having incautiously suffered myself to be ensnared, and feeling my head grow giddy, and an unaccountable drowsiness gathering over me, which I have since discovered to be owing to an infusion of something into the wine and water I had taken at ——— and of which, being thirsty, I had drank rather freely, I had little power of remonstrating--yet still I felt inclined, tho' I know not why, to confide in his honor, and to think myself protected, at least for that night, from any licentious advances.

Supper was ordered, and I heard him
parti-

particularly direct two bed-rooms to be got in readiness, but my mind as well as my whole frame was so violently disturbed that I have little recollection of what passed——

—————Except that after having taken a sort of fullen leave of Mr. Dutton, I was conducted by a female servant (a decent looking country-woman) to a chamber, and left to my repose---but I could not have been long in bed, for I was scarcely sunk into an imperfect slumber, when I felt some person by my side---I screamed out, but Dutton had me fast-locked in his arms, and resistance was in vain.

The morning came, but found me not familiarized to the measures of guilt, or insensible to the shame that was sure to attend it---I wept and raved with all the violence of distraction, nor could the accomplished traitor's specious arguments, tho' dressed up in the delusive garb of sophistry, and interlarded with specious vows of eternal fidelity, reconcile me a moment to myself. Alas, reflexion had assailed me with accumulating terrors, and I shrunk from the light as from
a ma-

a malicious fiend that wantonly exposed the mischief that was done!

Overpowered with the heavy consciousness of my crime, there was nothing I dreaded so much as the thoughts of ever again facing the most injured of men--the wretch who had me in his power observed a conflict in my distracted breast, and when I had once nearly determined to run every risk, and, whether I obtained your forgiveness or not, consign myself to a distant seclusion from the world, he pictured such a dreadful scene, such fatal consequences in case I attempted it, that my resolution gave way, and I suffered myself to be conveyed to London.

(And if I had power to describe the bitter anguish of my soul, or to express with what a bleeding heart I was hurried along the roads, which in days of innocence and happiness I had traversed with the most affectionate of husbands, my punishment would be pronounced almost equal to my crime.

Every face that looked on me seemed to dart reproach that stung me to the
soul

soul—honest indignation seemed roused to upbraid me—I felt like an outcast from the world—from friends—from connexions——

My little infant!——

Gracious God!—I was wretch enough to abandon my child!——

* * * *

I was now with Mr. Dutton in London, in fashionable and expensive apartments in B—— Street. Proud of the success of his exploits, and eager to gratify his unbounded vanity (though manifestly at the expence of every thing dear to me) the ungenerous wretch from time to time introduced several of his profligate associates to visit me---they were to be sure, chiefly his countrymen, and without meaning any general reflexion, I believe it is admitted that the gentlemen of Ireland are not always the most delicate in their conduct on such occasions ---but as a singular instance of consummate villainy, I have been informed that Mr. Dutton absolutely boasted in a crowded
coffee-

coffee-house of his triumph over, and being then in possession of the wife of his friend.

* * * * *

The event of the trial, however, in which the jury, wisely measuring the nature and the extent of your injury, awarded such considerable damages,* was soon discoverable in his conduct at home---mean enough to consider me as the primary cause of his being obliged to abscond in order to avoid imprisonment (his relations having peremptorily declared their resolution to renounce him) his behaviour soon descended from cold politeness to mortifying indifference, and at length sunk into marked brutality.

I was now left to reflect on my indiscretions, and on the sacrifice I had made of my honor and my peace. My God, into what abject misery was I plunging!

This honorable despoiler of domestic happiness, this traitor to his bosom-friend,
now

* The verdict was for ten thousand pounds.

now fatiated with possession and ripe for new enterprizes, found it expedient to concert a plan which might afford a plausible pretence to abandon me, and actually contrived to bring one of his countrymen (properly instructed for the purpose) who at a convenient opportunity was to become a candidate for my affections---this necessary tool of accommodating friendship, in his first outset betrayed his purpose---for the chief argument he had the insolence to make use of was the necessity I was under in justice to myself, of revenging the unmerited slights I met with from Mr. Dutton (HIS FRIEND!) and the check it would be to his pride to find I had taken the spirited resolution of flying from a fellow so unworthy my regard. But I instantly saw through the shallow artifice, and although my virtue had hitherto slumbered, it was on this occasion roused into a sense of its consequence, and with becoming and successful dignity overwhelmed the infamous abettors of the nefarious plot in terror and confusion.

Defeated in this unmanly attempt, Mr. Dutton felt himself at a loss to accomplish

compleish his purpose, unless by some deeper laid stratagem, and the expedient he had afterwards recourse to might have answered, had I not had reason for suspicion and of course took every occasion to guard myself against imposition.

One evening after I had been anxiously waiting for Mr. Dutton's return from a fashionable gaming-house to which he was accustomed to dedicate his midnight hours, I was a good deal surprized to find him greet me on his entrance with a fondness I had long been estranged to, and if the colouring had not been too glaring I might have been deluded into a temporary belief of its reality, supposing that some extraordinary success at play had elevated his spirits, but under my circumstances, cautious and suspicious, I watched his motions, and was presently convinced that some mischief was lurking under the mask of good-nature---the clock struck four, and suddenly pretending to recollect himself, he said it was hardly worth while to undress, as he had promised to accompany Colonel L---ll a few miles on the road to Liverpool, and the chaise was to call for him between
four

four and five---he hoped therefore I would have the goodness to forgive his having trespassed on my repose, and begged me to retire to rest.

If guilt is not always marked with appearances of suspicion, there is frequently something ambiguous in its movements, that leads to its own destruction---I was now persuaded that some new manœuvre was on foot, and that it behoved me warily to watch the progress of it---pretending therefore to be satisfied, I wished him an agreeable journey, and withdrew to my chamber.

I threw myself into an easy chair by the bed-side, with Rousseau's Julia in my hand, intending to keep myself awake to watch the progress of the suspected conspiracy; but nature overpowered with excessive fatigue, at length gave way, and I was almost lost in a slumber, when I was alarmed by hearing a creaking from that side of my room where the closet was, and listening, I heard some person tread softly towards the bed---I remained for a moment rivetted to my seat with astonishment and fear, but with a wonderful presence of mind, I counterfeited
sleep

sleep until I heard the person get into the bed, when flying to the bell and ringing it violently, screaming all the time, I alarmed the house, and the fellow jumping out of bed, collected his cloaths and precipitately retreated.

That some of the servants connived at his escape there is no room whatever to doubt, otherwise nothing could have been easier than to intercept and apprehend him.

My brother indeed, by extraordinary pains, found out one of the domestics, and partly by threats and partly by holding out a reward, he drew from him some outlines of that part of the plot, to which it had been found necessary to make *him* privy, which if it did not amount to an absolute discovery, went very near to corroborate every circumstance I had apprehended.

Mr. Dutton I have never since beheld ——— this was his last effort to dishonor and disgrace me, and having failed, he thought it expedient to abscond and leave me to my fate.

Day after day I expected his return, but hearing no tidings of him, and the
 peo-

people of the house becoming importunate for their rent, which I was destitute of the means of discharging, I determined to secure what few valuables I had, and give up the apartments.

I was directed by a good kind of a woman who kept an earthen-ware shop in ————Street (and to whom I had communicated some circumstances of my story) to a lodging in Petty-France, Westminster, whither I went, and having converted my little articles into money, I found myself mistress of about seventeen guineas.

I thought it might possibly fall in my way, before this sum was entirely exhausted, to provide myself with some needlework, or engage in some humble domestic occupation, which might serve to keep the horrors of want at a distance.

But as a stranger without friends or any particular recommendation, I soon found it altogether impracticable to derive any support in that line, and my little stock gradually decreasing, in about four months, I saw myself on the eve of being exposed to all the miseries of indigence and distress. —

Here

Here let the thoughtless fair one turn her eyes and survey the melancholy wreck of shattered reputation—blest but a few months since with health, with wealth and honor, splendor and happiness awaited my call, and I commanded the suffrages of a devoted world—flattering and bright were my morning prospects, and tranquil and serene my evening hours; pleasures sanctioned by innocence and purity encircled me round, and every joy I had power to communicate to others I received back with ten-fold satisfaction; this was the enviable state of conscious virtue—now mark the fatal reverse---pining in a miserable chamber, scantily supplied with common necessities, behold the forsaken Caroline, doomed to linger out a guilty existence---no friend to sooth, to pity or protect her---her mind torn by a dreadful variety of contending passions, one moment feeling the dire workings of despair, and the next assailed by reflection, settling into the sad stillness of melancholy remorse.

Ah look into thyself, wretched girl---see thy happiest hours of promised life for ever blasted---see thyself at the early

D

age

age of *nineteen* fatally cut off from every hope, from every prospect that could make existence desirable.

And ye giddy sons of licentiousness and dissipation, who, like the treacherous seducer, Dutton, determine on the destruction of the fair fabric of domestic felicity ; if the monitor reflection, but for a moment prevails, think 'ere ye strike the irremediable blow, what scenes of horror are about to burst on the wretched victim to your guilty pleasures? -- go unrestrained explore the midnight brothel, and barter with devoted beauty for the meretricious gratification, but trespass not on the roof of private friendship, nor involve in your crimes, the defenceless virgin and unguarded wife.

*

*

*

That welcome refuge of the unhappy, self-destruction, now presented itself as the last sad shelter from misery and reproach -- yet not until my finances were reduced to a solitary sixpence, and my scanty wardrobe hardly afforded me sufficient to appear in, did I take the fatal resolution.

Friend-

Friendless and forsaken, I saw myself sinking under the pressure of sorrow and want, and whichever way I turned the prospect was dreadful; to struggle therefore against the severity of my destiny, would be only lengthening my misery, and eventually aggravating it.

I fixed upon Rosoman's pond in the Green Park to perpetrate the horrid deed, and one evening, (which I determined should close the scene of my misfortunes) I walked several times round the pond, watching an opportunity to plunge into it unobserved, but as the evening was remarkably fine, and the company induced to enjoy it, I saw the necessity of deferring it 'till a later hour, and in order to prevent my being taken any notice of, I wandered along the wilderness which led towards the rangers---here I met with a poor woman with two infants who solicited charity---I stooped for a moment to compare within myself the different sort of miseries we were contending with, and recollecting that my last sixpence would soon be useless to me, I threw it towards her, but as I observed it rolling from the gravel towards the turf, I turned round to

see if she had secured it, when immediately behind me my eyes encountered a form on which they gazed an instant, and whilst I just uttered the word "BROTHER" they closed, and I sunk lifeless on the ground.

When recovered, I found myself reclined on a bench in the arms of my brother, whose emotions at so unexpected a rencontre were nearly as violent as mine.

Our first greetings were affectionately interchanged, and he pressed me to his bosom as the dearly beloved sister of his youth, but when he talked of attending me HOME, my conscious heart shrunk from the proposal, and I hesitated—then the secret began to betray itself, and the best of brothers presently found he was straining within his embraces *her* that had dishonoured and disgraced him.*

The tear of disappointment stole down his manly cheek, but fraternal affection rushed into his heart—he took my hand—"come, Caroline, the die is cast, and we may ament the misfortune, but 'tis not possible to remedy it—'tis well that

* Mr. Osborne had only arrived in London that morning from the Continent.

our departed parents are spared the anguish of this discovery—yet they would not have renounced their favourite child nor suffer her to be plunged into greater calamities; I must be a friend, Caroline, as well as a brother.

Rescued from the dreadful sacrifice I was about to make, I returned with him to the solitary chamber, from which despair had so lately driven me, impiously armed against myself, and having discharged the rent (of which there was not more than a week in arrear) he hurried me away to an apartment in the neighbourhood of Leicester Fields.

And with unwearied attention, with unceasing assiduity—with all the soothing and welcome consolations of tenderness, did the amiable youth strive to reconcile me to myself—but the blow was struck, and I fell into a decline, which I saw with secret satisfaction, promised to put a speedy period to my sufferings and disgrace.

Wasted and worn to a wretched spectacle, at last the Bristol-hot-wells were recommended as a final resource, and more from a wish to oblige my brother

ther and reward his generous attention, than from any hope of being benefited, I undertook the journey, but was so weak and reduced as to be upwards of ten days on the road.

I have now been nearly a fortnight confined to the chamber, from whence I pen this melancholy record—it has cost me much labour and many tears, but I have struggled hard to accomplish it—I feel myself hastily approaching my end—no medicines can avail—my life pays the forfeit of my indiscretions, and I surrender it with becoming resignation.

My brother, Mr. Fortescue, has promised to endeavour by every possible exertion to find you out, and try to persuade you, by representing me as I really am, to indulge me with your forgiveness—I think I have a good deal to hope from the tenderness, the generosity of your nature.

But should my final summons arrive before he returns—should I go without the melancholy gratification of being forgiven (which I dare say you will be sorry for) let not this last prayer of dying penitence be forgotten ——— may every
 blessing,

bleffing, every happiness await you, and may the remembrance of an unfortunate girl who once ardently loved you, never embitter a future moment or incline you to judge too harshly of our sex—another Caroline there cannot be.

And may I, Mr. Fortescue, without being suspected of a wish to impeach your uniform generosity, venture to breathe one tender maternal sigh for that dear infant I was cruel enough to abandon--suffer its dying mother to commit it to your paternal care, and should the base tongue of calumny wantonly aggravate the story of my shame, remember I here call God to witness, that during the career of fatal indiscretion, my only guilt was with Mr. Dutton.

Oh, Fortescue, if the recollection of our past loves should steal in at this melancholy moment and give birth to a tender sentiment in favour of the unhappy Caroline, for pity's sake nourish the gentle prepossession---I will look down from the other world, if heaven, accepting my penitence will receive me, and watch over you and the little innocent with affectionate and grateful fond-

So AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

ness, such as *then* may be worthily bestowed, considering it comes from a source purified in the presence of Angels.

CAROLINE FORTESCUE.

LETTER XI.

TO MISS COURTNEY.

ABBAY-HOUSE.—*Friday.*

YOU will pronounce me a perverse little Girl, Eleanor, for dwelling with such apparent satisfaction on subjects that are irksome to my friend---alas my dear, this heart of mine must have suffered a wonderful and a sudden depravity if a few short weeks could have made it insensible to gratitude or friendship---I am not saying this to a stranger, 'tis to the faithful companion of my earliest youth, who is acquainted with every thought and is convinced that I never harboured a wish which I should endeavour to conceal from her.

Knowing

Knowing the dominion you hold over my heart, you are undoubtedly satisfied that nothing could ever diminish your sovereignty there---Ah leave me then, my dear, faithfully to obey its innocent dictates---nor teach me the necessity of dissembling with my friend.

And I have just felt a whisper of conviction that tells me I shall be guilty of dissimulation if I seek to conceal any thing that relates to a subject in which I own I am unaccountably interested.

The stranger is returned.

I was at the vicarage last night, and Mrs. Davenport and I in a vein of sober sentiment were recounting some of the amiable qualities of a certain absent acquaintance of ours, when we discovered a dark figure crossing the Green and making towards us---various were our conjectures until Mr. Fortescue appeared habited in deep fables---his naturally fine form and manly graces received additional sanction from his dress---he saluted us as friends that he thought worthy his regard, and I think during the whole evening discovered an unusual elevation of spirits---perhaps the barrier

that stood between him and happiness is removed--yet if so, why return to his melancholy scene of exile--Mrs. Davenport once risked a slight enquiry into the cause of his abrupt departure from us, but instead of replying he seemed musing for some kind of excuse, and with delicate adroitness she instantly changed the subject.

Surely my dear girl, the situation of Mr. Fortescue's affections must be a complete security against the evil you seem apprehensive of? what girl possessed of common discretion could let her heart nourish an attachment to a man, who was evidently suffering under the impression of a first love?--indeed indeed, Eleanor, you have nothing to fear for your friend.

* * * *

My giddy sister broke in upon me to have a consultation, as she was pleased to call it, on a dress for her to appear it at an Assembly to be given by the Officers at--and I was obliged to humour her flippancy for above an hour, during which my little manuscript was consigned to my
cabin.

cabinet---I expect the dinner bell to ring every minute, and shall therefore not attempt to sit down with any degree of composure, but just hastily tell you that I shall steal away to the Vicarage in the evening, and at my return will close my epistle.

By the confusion amongst the servants I suppose we are to have an uncommon croud of visitors to-day.

* * * * *

Midnight.

I shall be found guilty of harbouring certain romantic sentiments by my sober correspondent in her judicial capacity of lecturer to her friend, when she finds I date this fragment at the awful hour of midnight---and that I tell her the bright beams of a delightful moon are playing on the bosom of a silver stream that winds irregularly thro' the valley before me, and which my solitary window commands an uninterrupted view of---Ah me!--this is the hour my Eleanor singled out for alarm, and yet her undaunted friend is fearlessly gazing on the surrounding scene and smiling at chimerical horrors.

On

On the rise of the opposite hill are the ruins of a church roofless and neglected—hark! the bell tolls from the turrets—all is silent again—now pale ghosts are assembling in yonder Churchyard, undisturbed by human footsteps—now the apparition of the poor pedlar (who was found murdered one winter's night in the dark lane below) is haunting the spot to alarm the solitary traveller—yet here I sit, indifferent, unconcerned—altho' the chamber I occupy is at the extremity of a long winding gallery, and has not a habitable room within a considerable distance of it.

Well then, my dear, I am, you see, absolutely hardened, and there's an end at once of all your schemes to frighten me away.

Now for the history of the evening.

We had indeed a strange motley groupe at dinner, and I thought every moment an age until I could decently make my escape—at last I contrived to steal away unobserved, and with lightened steps tript to the vicarage.

I had

I had got within a very little distance of the house, when turning round the garden wall, Mr. Fortescue was instantly before me—he was returning from the vicarage, the worthy divine being absent at a funeral and Mrs. Davenport called out to attend a neighbour who had just lain in—my visit therefore would have been lost and I must either have retreated back sullenly to the Abbey house, or sought out some solitary path to linger away the hours I had otherwise so happily disposed of—Mr. Fortescue politely sympathized for the disappointment I had met with, and with becoming delicacy hinted that the evening was delightful, and he should think himself peculiarly honored if I would condescend to accompany him in a little walk thro' the pleasant winding of the wood—our house had no charms for me, Fortescue's converse was irresistibly engaging, and where inclination leads (I am unreservedly confessing all my frailties, Eleanor) every argument is readily admitted—away we rambled together, and insensibly wandering from the main road we got into the thickest seclusion of the wood
and

and there for three hours we amused ourselves in tracing and retracing its almost impenetrable recesses---

——More pouting my dear---more cause for declamation against this rebel correspondent of yours.

Yes Eleanor, until the setting sun and coolness of the western breeze warned me to retire, did I dedicate the happy moments to friendship and to Fortescue.

And are these dawnings of virtuous esteem to be overcast by the chilling gloom of cold prudery? has conscious innocence no safeguard in itself, or are we to judge of all mankind by the vitiated principles of a depraved few?---no, Eleanor, Julia's infant mind received certain generous impressions which it will require some violence to remove.

Oh that you were here, Eleanor, and would be convinced---that you could listen to Mr. Fortescue's distinguished eloquence---mark the exalted purity of his sentiments, and observe the delicate respect which invariably graces his every action---how soon would prejudice sink away, and on its ruins arise a lasting monument of admiration?

Am

Am I in love my dear?—I hear you reply—I see the earnest stare which spreads over your animated countenance—now you wish you had me under the friendly shelter of your generous roof—now you fly with affectionate zeal to your pen and commence the well-meant lecture—what a troublesome creature is this Julia Legrand, thus to occasion so much inquietude in the bosom of her dearest friend.

Heigh-ho what shall I say—me thinks I could dwell for ever on this pleasing theme—yet I feel a powerful attraction towards my Eleanor, and I would not for the world wilfully give her a moment's uneasiness.

Then let us be serious my dear, and with that candor which I have ever given you credit for, tell me your sentiments—give me your advice—am I in danger? I have heard that love has its sweet delusions—I am neither well or ill—a constant fluttering about my bosom—it can surely bode no harm—something may be amiss notwithstanding—another heigh-ho—I'll retire to my pillow—good night,--

night--may Angels guard the roof of my beloved friend.

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER XII.

TO MISS JULIA LEGRAND:

WINDSOR.—*Sunday.*

I will be serious, Julia, and seriously and in few words, I pronounce you to be galloping apace into love. The subtle tyrant is forging chains for you.

“And under friendship’s borrow’d name

“He aims at thy incautious heart.”

Oh how fervently have I prayed that the spiteful flirt, whoever she be, that sent this doleful figure sighing into Wales, was leading apes in a certain naughty place!

’Tis all a wicked trick of malicious destiny to rob me of my Julia’s affections, and transplant them to an undeserving wretch of the other sex.

Ah my dear, are you aware of the effects of these dangerous condescensions? then, ere it be too late let me point them out to you.

Depend

Depend upon it the pride of conquest is inherent in the minds of most men, they may talk of disinterestedness, but dear self is at the bottom of all their pursuits.

The common mode of hacknied advances would have done nothing with a mind like Julia Legrand. This wretch was too artful, too conversant in the science, not to know it, and he has assailed you accordingly.

You may yet recover yourself, but it must be by immediate flight.

Seriousness, I know, sits but awkwardly upon me, but I love my Julia, and however prone to levity, I have private moments sacred to friendship and to her.

A time may come (yet heaven forbid it) when Julia will wish she had profited by my admonitions, and abandoned a place marked for the destruction of her peace----I say heaven forbid it, for surely you will instantly set a resolution to prevent the unavailing sorrow which after-reflection furnishes.

Oh then at once determine---let your sister reign sole arbitress of her old fashioned mansion, do you renounce abbey, vicarage, wood and vale and bring to these

these social and to you, once pleasing
scenes a heart to be divided only with

Your,

ELEANOR COURTNEY

LETTER XIII.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

KEONCAER-VALE,—Wednesday.

THE crisis of misfortune is past, and your friend lives to announce his triumph over adversity—Frederic I shall soon be the Fortescue your generous partiality wished me—I now find a pleasing tranquility in my breast which I but lately thought it impossible for me ever to have known, unless by an universal revolution of nature; and that memory may no more disturb me with painful retrospects, I have determined to let the last two years of my life be expunged from my history, and reckoned only a blank.

Lieutenant Osborne has written to me in terms of the most lively and respectful gratitude—he has had an interview, he
tells

tells me, with Lord **** and from what I understand passed between them, I have no doubt but that it will answer the purpose I intended.

I sincerely respect him, and most earnestly wish he may have success equal to his merits—but for *him* the unhappy wanderer had been destitute of those faint rays of comfort which gleamed on the early evening of her life—and but for *him* tranquility and peace had yet been strangers to the bosom of your friend.

The trial was severe, but the hand that afflicted me had power to heal.

Ah Frederic, I loved her---amidst the ruins of domestic happiness I still thought of her as the first choice of my heart, and I pitied the *woman* whilst I suffered from the injuries of the *wife*.

A solitary sigh sometimes escapes me which I try not to resist, for I consider it a tribute of humanity that any unfortunate beauty might claim, cut off, like her, in the flower of her days.

Society had offended me sorely, and I renounced it with cordial disgust, but I am not naturally inexorable, and I think I must e'en make it up and try to glean
from

from amongst the worthy part of it, my humble portion of contentment.

My story is yet a secret to this part of the world, and I mean it to remain so. Not that I am dissembler enough to conceal this sudden alteration in my affairs--I manage it as well as I can, but the change is manifest, and with people less delicate in their curiosity, I should be embarrassed to account for it.

We have really a charming little society every evening at the vicarage—a lovely girl who came a few weeks since on a visit to her brother at the Abbey-house (which you have heard me speak of) is constantly of our party, and I cannot help wondering that I have so long omitted mentioning her in my correspondence---I suppose I have been so taken up with my own private misfortunes and the vicissitudes which have attended them, as to have offered but melancholy subjects for my friend to peruse---I will now brighten the scene a little.

Miss Legrand possesses that engaging complacency of manners, that happy dignity of demeanor, which secures whilst
it

it exacts the most cordial homage--but she deals out her condescensions with such delicate frugality, and seems so loth to sacrifice the attention to worthless insensibility, that altho' it may betray a consciousness of its importance, it enhances its value where she bestows it--her person is not beautiful, but there is a captivating something about her that irresistibly challenges admiration.

I cannot say but that of late I have taken some pains to ingratiate myself into her favour and good offices, and I have succeeded so far that we are on a footing of the most social familiarity---reserve dwells not at the vicarage, but a licentious breath never yet profaned the sacred circle.

The Abbey House stands on the summit of a hill about half a mile distant from Mr. Percival's, and as my dwelling is nearly in the same direction, I am honored almost every evening with the care of Miss Legrand to her brother's---sometimes I think all is not as it should be with her---I have more than once surprised her in a solitary path, musing and pensive, when the Abbey House has furnish-
ed

ed scenes of festive mirth and attractive gaiety---and when I have hinted the loss her friends must sustain by her secession, she forces a half smile, and observes that such amusements are not calculated for *her*.

Perhaps her affections are arrested, and a martyr to untold love, "she pines in thought."

Or perhaps some villain---

Ah no! that mind is the throne of innocence supreme, and the self created barrier of virtue is there invulnerable.

I know not how it is, but I feel singularly interested in whatever relates to *her*.

The vicar too is a charming old man, uncontrolled by any violent passions, his life is one uniform system of calmness and content---an engaging smile which brightens his venerable brow greets you with unaffected complacency and welcomes you with genuine hospitality---Miss Legrand is high in his esteem and seems to be affectionately attached to him---such privileges, Frederic, are sweet softeners of declining life.

We

We have some other amiable characters in our party, but Julia Legrand surpasses all---and I have little inclination for description after I have done with her.

Another time I may possibly say something about them, but my sheet is full, and I have hardly room to re-assure my friend of the sincerest esteem of his,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XIV.

TO MISS COURTNEY, AT WINDSOR.

ABBAY-HOUSE.—*Sunday.*

I HAVE consulted with my heart, dear Eleanor, and have determined it shall capitulate. I ask no other terms for the deluded rebel than permission to stay here a fortnight longer, at the expiration of which I pledge myself to march out of the vale with all the honors of friendship.

Yet believe me my dear, this is a sacrifice which I should have found a great difficulty in making to any thing less than
the

the solicitude you so affectionately feel on my account---longer to have resisted would have been an ungenerous insult to your affection, and justly excluded me from claiming its consolations in any future stage of misfortune---should my obstinacy or any other failing forfeit me the esteem of my Eleanor, I am lost indeed.

Our intercourse by letter now draws to a conclusion.---I own I promised myself, at the outset, a good deal of pleasure in the prospect of reciprocating by this means our mutual sentiments---and I consoled myself with the idea of its proving a sovereign sweetener of those little inquietudes which naturally occur in absence and distance for each other---but you have been disappointed---Your Julia has been a poor correspondent---instead of amusing her friend she has from time to time furnished her with subjects for anxiety and alarm. She has wounded the dearest interests of private friendship.

And but for this captivating stranger who stole so inopportunistically into our retirement, I should still have been permitted to enjoy its innocent pleasures---foolish girl--

girl--- to believe *his* presence would bring with it a source of new delight and amusement!---I saw not with the eyes of needful circumspection, I had not been taught the wary lessons of suspicion.

How strange is it, my dear, that you think so lightly of Mr. Fortescue, as not to enquire more particularly into the circumstances of his seclusion from the world?

Yet had you taken it up with all the eagerness of female curiosity, I could not till yesterday have furnished you with the least clue that could lead to a discovery---and now though I am convinced he is struggling with some severe oppression, I have no more idea of the nature of it than if I had never seen him.

He had, he told me, the poems of Ossian, and I expressed a wish to read them---they were accordingly sent to my brother's, and on turning over a few pages I met the following Sonnet in his own hand-writing, and marked with the initials annexed.

E

SONNET.

SONNET.

REAR'D in the sun-shine of life's opening day,
 My earlier hours were lull'd in soft delight;
 And whilst advancing seasons roll'd away,
 The flatt'ring prospect charm'd my ravish'd sight.

Ah me, what storms assail my riper years,
 Black disappointment, anguish, sighs and tears!

Fresh with the dawn, and cheer'd by hope's soft smile,
 The early traveller his course maintains;
 A thousand charms the ling'ring way beguile,
 And blythe he traverses the distant plains.

The shades of evening fall—no shelter near,
 His anxious bosom swells with rising fear;—
 The treach'rous phantom lures—his course is o'er,
 And, like me, lost, he sinks to rise no more.

A. F.

I could not resist the commission of a little act of plunder on this occasion, and having taken a copy I replaced the paper where I met with it, and the first opportunity shall return the book.

The calamity he complains of could be of no common kind---it can avail me nothing to know it, but I have a strange desire to discover what singular visitations can have marked the destiny of so amiable a character.

Mrs. Davenport and her worthy uncle are of opinion that it is a love affair---for my part I sit silent when the subject is mentioned,

mentioned, and only listen to glean intelligence which they are as unable to afford me, as I am to satisfy myself by a world of imperfect conjectures.

But my pen feels heavy---the night is advanced, and I will only add, that my best love attends you.

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER XV.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

LONDON.—*Tuesday.*

I AM delighted with the charming recluse you mention, and earnestly wish that for her sake you may be prevailed on to draw a veil over past scenes, and be once again reconciled to the more elegant endearments of life.

This singular vicissitude shew how circumscribed the limits of human discernment are—in all my ministration of friendship it never occurred to me to anticipate such an event as the death of the unhappy Caroline. Providence in pity to the sufferings of my friend graci-

E 2 ously

ously thought proper to arrest her course, and give him once more an opportunity to place happiness within his reach.

Oh then, my friend, my Fortescue, cultivate the valuable moment, and determine to be happy.

Suppose, as the winter approaches, you were to venture a trip to London—we will do our best endeavours to facilitate the task of retrieving suspended felicity—my Harriet thinks with me that retirement may feed reflexion too much, and rather retard your cure—the variety of livelier scenes may be more efficacious.

Let your next tell us when we may expect you—in the mean time—Adieu.

I am ever sincerely your's,

F. NORMAN.

LETTER XVI.

TO MISS LEGRAND.

WINDSOR.—*Wednesday.*

JULIA, you are a dear good girl, and I not only absolve you for all the uneasi-

uneasiness you have occasioned me by the fears I have given way to on your account, but the prompt and generous condescension in your last has absolutely turned the scale, and I am and ever shall be your debtor.

You have really terrified me so unaccountably from time to time, that I have not had leisure to think or write about any thing else but your own immediate safety.—Ah, my dear, I saw how necessary it was for you to be circumspect, and to regard the cautious dictates of suspicion—however 'tis all over, and I will now give you a little domestic intelligence which I am sure you will receive with pleasure.

Mama's peevish humour having nearly tired itself out, she at last consented to see poor Edward, and to put the naughty delinquent on his defence---this pious resolution of the old lady was the effect of dear Mrs. Godfrey's kind offices and salutary remonstrances, and having once formed it, I believe, mama is as thankful to Mrs. Godfrey for her intercession, as that good creature was at first for carrying her point.

Sunday last was the day appointed for the self-created tribunal to sit---and just before tea in the afternoon, my poor conscious-looking brother made his entree, but by way of guarantee he had judged it expedient to bring a friend with him (an officer in the same regiment) to whom it might be necessary to make an occasional appeal as evidence in the course of his examination; and very ably did the two friends support each other--my brother's companion (a Mr. Osborne) is a very agreeable eloquent young man and he took infinite pains to plead the defaulter's cause. Dame Courtney pursed up her mouth, and with a contracted brow reprobated my brother's misconduct, and enlarged on the tendency of such evil examples.---He deprecated the severity of offended justice by an appeal to the humanity of his judge.---The court softened---I wept for joy---brother melted in well-timed sympathy, and mama was reconciled.

It seems however, that matters have been a good deal exaggerated by the number of hands they have passed through---Edward declaring on his honor
(and

(and his friend with equal solemnity confirming the assertion) that the lady whom he brought to Windsor in the chaise with him, was not of the night-party at Salt-Hill.

The rest of the evening went away delightfully---my brother was in high spirits after his acquittal, and together with his friend was charmingly entertaining---we walked on the Terras which was honored with the presence of the Royal Residents, and I think afforded as brilliant and gratifying a spectacle as ever Windsor could boast of. The gentlemen supped with us, and breakfasted the next morning---they are now gone to pass a day or two in shooting at Mr. ———'s seat in Berkshire.

Edward's friend has attained no higher rank than lieutenant, though he has served a campaign in America, and is but lately come home---he is just such a man as you would like, my dear, but I believe you must be contented with this description of him at present, for before your fortnight is expired, I fancy he will be for taking a trip across the water to the Continent: and from some hints which

dropt I rather think my brother intends to accompany him---they promised to call on us the latter end of the week in their way to town, and if any thing new occurs I shall let you know.

I have a profusion of careffes for you, my Julia, but I know not how to convey them at such a distance, I shall therefore keep them until I can personally offer them.

Ever yours,

ELEANOR COURTNEY.

LETTER XVII.

TO FREDERICK NORMAN, ESQ.

KEONCAER-VALE, — *Thursday.*

THE kind interest you take in the concerns of your friend, he can never be insensible of;---acknowledgments between us are at an end---they would sound like the ceremonies of compliment.

I confess I feel no inclination at present to leave the country---independent of the attachment I have had reason to form to
this

this scene of my seclusion, London would but ill agree with me in this sultry season.

Be under no apprehension, Frederic, of my losing ground in the advances I am making---I view things through a different medium from what I have heretofore done---I mean since the commencement of the gloomier pages of my history.

This girl, this charming Julia Legrand is gaining upon me surprizingly.

There is a niece of Mr. Percival's, a Mrs. Davenport, a fugitive from one of the convents in Normandy, who is really enough of herself to embellish a scene of this kind with the graces of wit and beauty, and would doubtless be the distinguished Belle of the place, but for the transcendent excellencies of the other.

What a palpable profanation of every thing lovely was it to consign beauty and accomplishments like Julia Legrand's to such obscurity!

There must be some latent cause for it, which I feel strongly inclined to investigate---if it was merely to gratify common place curiosity I would forbear, but

106 AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

I have an interest in her fate that will not let me be indifferent.

I send you a short letter, but a post or two shall make you amends.

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

KEONCAFR-VALE.

I AM sadly disconcerted--- Miss Legrand has been consulting with *me* this evening on the expediency of obeying the summons of some friends of her's who reside at Windsor, and who have insisted on her immediately leaving the vale.

I told her I was ill qualified to advise her, since it was impossible for me to speak on such a subject with the disinterestedness it might require---She understood me, and seemed for a moment embarrassed for a reply.---

At length with a deep sigh which she did not appear to have a wish to suppress, she

she said her word was pledged to be at Windsor in a fortnight, some part of which was already expired--“it was drawn from me rather reluctantly,” added she, “but I yielded to the superior judgment of my friends.”--

“They know the value of your society, Miss Legrand, and how many rivals are necessarily contending for it--I almost think it a selfishness which ought to be punished with a little disappointment.”

“They are very kind to me, Mr. Fortescue, and their partiality induces them to think this place solitary and cheerless--they judge only comparatively and in some respects erroneously, because they do not consider that in these retired scenes happiness may be found by those who court it, and that it is no unlikely thing for the heart involuntarily to form attachments which it trembles to be torn from---I never passed happier hours,” continued she, “than in this delightful valley.”--

And are they generous enough to consider, Miss Legrand, how many are interested in, and will suffer by your abandoning a place which has been so
happy

happy as to be honored with your presence? Surely a good deal might be said to warrant your lengthening your visit at a season when the country is in its greatest perfection." —

"To oppose the well-meant admonitions of those who voluntarily interest themselves in our welfare might be deemed a species of ingratitude which in me would be particularly unbecoming, nor have I power to refuse to the gentleness of intreaty what I might have found a difficulty in yielding to the harshness of command."

"You acknowledge, Miss Legrand, you have passed some pleasant hours in this part of the world, and I with equal frankness will declare the same---it may have excited your curiosity to find me in this distant and remote retirement---some misfortunes of a domestic nature had wounded my peace of mind, and I determined to try the effects of a temporary seclusion from the world.—I came here not very well pleased with it, and in a state of mind very unlikely to imbibe a more favourable opinion---but a change has happened, and I am better reconciled
of

of late, inasmuch that I was on the point of accomplishing the purpose for which I withdrew from society, when I am threatened with a new disaster---seriously, Miss Legrand, and without the mockery of compliment my restoration depends on your continuing with us."

"I should be sorry, Sir, to retard, much more to frustrate the good effects you promised yourself in this retirement, but it appears to me that Mr. Fortescue could have but slender doubts of his recovery if it depended on so unimportant a circumstance as *my* staying in the vale."

I was now on the point of an explanation which would necessarily have disclosed the main circumstances of my story, when the awkward old porch belonging to the Abbey-house appeared before us, and I had but just time to avail myself of the advantage of a few minutes to exact a promise from the dear girl, that she would hear me further on the subject to-morrow evening; and in the mean time suspend her determination of leaving us, before I surrendered my lovely charge, and returned sullen and silent to the vale.

And

And here I have sat down to write.-- 'tis past midnight, but as the post calls for my letter early in the morning, and as I have not paid so much attention to my friend of late as I feel he deserves for his anxiety on my account, I would not miss the present opportunity.---

Your's sincerely,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

L E T T E R X I X .

TO THE SAME.

I DESERVE a very severe rebuke for being in such wonderful haste to dispatch my last--had I reserved it until I had completed the sequel of the interview with Miss Legrand, you would have been spared one addition to the many gloomy tasks my correspondence has afforded you.

This is the hour I have been accustomed to dedicate to friendship and my pen---the family are long since retired to rest, and the valley is hushed in general silence--I have no inclination to court
the

the favors of the leaden god, and shall therefore relate to you the occurrences of the evening.

I thought it would be no difficult matter to intercept my fair companion about the usual time of walking to the vicarage, and was fortunate enough to meet her on the hill;--the evening favored my design, and I persuaded her to forego her intended visit to Mr. Percival's, and honor me with her company in a ramble through the wood*.

"Our conversation last night, Miss Legrand, was growing interesting at the moment it was interrupted, but the generous permission you give me to renew the subject seems to promise to atone for the suspense it has kept me in---in looking up to Miss Legrand as a friend, I know how far I am presuming, but there is an expressive sensibility in her countenance which charms the unfortunate into confidence---I have told you that disappointments and disasters of a very particular nature had driven me into a kind of self-inflicted exile---but before I can claim

* This is not the evening Miss Legrand alluded to in her letter to Miss Courtney.

any portion of your valuable consolation I must be more explicit." —

"If Mr. Fortescue, induced by the good opinion he does me the honor to entertain of me, should think proper on any occasion which related to himself, to repose a confidence in me, he may very soon be convinced how far I am interested in his welfare---it is a tribute, Sir, which merit like yours demands from every one, and to know that you have been unfortunate is already to secure you the sympathy of friendship."

Charming girl! with what delicious gratitude did I pour forth my acknowledgments, and with what sacred fidelity did I unbosom the melancholy secret--- Ah Norman, I told her all --I produced the dying letter---the tears started on her polished cheeks---she faltered---she hung upon me whilst her trembling limbs refused their office to her agitated frame---we wept together---to me it was an untaught luxury of grief!

The tender look of melting sensibility which the amiable weeping angel gave me, pierced my very soul---it was as much as to say---yet you will deem it vanity,

Frederic,

Frederic, and may besides think that my profane pen, by an ungenerous comparison is disturbing the ashes of the dead.

A mind like yours, Frederic, may presently conceive what further was likely to pass between us on this interesting subject. I have not at present sufficient powers of recollection to put it down with any method or regularity.

But whilst the lovely virgin's bosom was swelling with gentle sighs, and her eyes were betraying the sensibility of her soul, we found we had penetrated into the less frequented recesses of the wood, and that the path was suddenly terminated by a venerable rock which hung frowning over our heads, and presented before us the entrance of a wild subterranean cavern, the mouth of which was almost closed by circles of entwining ivy—Miss Legrand started at the sight, and turned about to retrace the path that had led us there, and I know not whether it would at that time have furnished us for a subject for conversation (for we seemed to be intent on something else) had we not been hailed by a female voice ere we had got many paces from the cavern, and
found

found ourselves followed by a tottering figure, resembling as much as possible the antiquated hag in Otway's Orphan—we stood still to receive her address, which was courteous enough, and rather better than what might have been expected from her appearance. “I have been,” said she, “the only inhabitant of yon cell these fifty years, and I am reported to have some skill in fortune-telling, in so much that I am consulted as a kind of oracle by the country people for miles about, and though I say it, I have done some little good in my time, for when any thing has been stolen, and the loser has threatened to come and consult *Judy Bell* upon it, the hint has operated, and the things been brought to light.”

The novelty of this address was amusing, and for a moment diverted us from the subject we had been engaged upon—I was about to ask Miss Legrand what she thought of it when the old sybil resumed.

“Gentlefolks of a better sort,” said she, “are above prejudice, and I dare venture to say it will repay your pains if you would condescend to enter the cavern,

vern, and see my way of living---the lower order of people are accustomed to speak to me on the outside of my cave, merely because they are weak enough to be afraid, but if you please you shall be welcome to take a view of the inside."----

I thought my fair companion seemed to have no objection, and I made a slight inclination to accede---our curiosity was awakened, and from its first impulse we followed our venerable guide.

Nature seemed to have been the chief architect, though the structure was artfully disposed.

The entrance was low and narrow, and we were obliged to stoop to get forwards; but it presently grew wider, and a light which glimmered from the top of the rock shewed the hollow of the cave---at a little distance before us we observed an eminence where a great stone was placed to facilitate the ascent---we went forwards, and found the cavern winding to the left, and were guided on by another light gleaming from the extremity---several broken avenues opened in different parts---in that which we were exploring we presently came to a kind of detached

tached cell, the door of which was made of interwoven wickers, and fastened on bits of leather as hinges, to a thick strong hedge stake---the floor was smooth and neatly sanded---in a corner on a parcel of rushes was spread a bed apparently made of straw, and confined in a clean decent ticken---three stools formed of knotty blocks were the seats---several implements of housewifery and for domestic use were curiously arranged on the shelves --- the place was upon the whole comfortable, and might suit a solitudinarian who had humility enough to be reconciled to such a situation.

The governess of the gloomy mansion having invited us to seat ourselves, took her place by our side, and eyeing us with profound attention, seemed desirous to impress us with a belief of her skill in necromancy---Miss Legrand smiled, and the old dame construing it into a symptom of encouragement, took one of her hands, and having earnestly examined the lines of it, shook her head, and told her all was not right there (patting her left bosom)---a deep scarlet suffused the lovely girl's countenance, and she struggled

gled hard, but in vain, to dissemble the sensation of it.---“You are soon to forsake this part of the world,” said the subtle prophets, “though sorely against your will, and somebody else is not very well pleased about it—but it will be useless to oppose it--distant attachments will prevail.”

If the former part of our hostess's address disconcerted poor Julia, the close of it did not much relieve her---I felt for the dear girl's embarrassment, and would fain have ridiculed the prediction as the casual result of imperfect conjecture, but I found my fair friend seriously inclined to listen to the sequel.

“Take care my sweet young lady of that little flutterer of yours---if it is not your own fault happiness may be within your reach---but sharp thorns sometimes lurk under the fairest roses.”

Here our self-qualified searcher into futurity turned to me, and with the same unceremonious familiarity was taking my hand, when I drew it back evidently unwilling to countenance such absurd practices, but the old lady would not be refused, and Miss Legrand absolutely joined

ed

ed in intreating me to suffer her to examine it.

"Poor gentleman," said she,---"melancholy changes you have seen within a few years---that ring (pointing to a mourning memento I had on my finger) is a dismal tell-tale---but for the future, be firm---struggle against the dominion of dangerous passions, and if you are not altogether as happy, you will never be as miserable as you have been."——

I ought to be ashamed of the unmanly infirmity, but absolutely, Frederic, I felt unaccountably chagrined by the old woman's harangue---Miss Legrand knew how aptly she had suited the circumstances of my case, and with pleasant adroitness rallied me on the temporary embarrassment I had been surprized into.

It was however but temporary---for almost immediately recovering myself, I affected an indifference as to the subject she had been hinting at, and giving the feeble forcerefs some silver, I proposed to her to conduct us out of the cave.

Having once more regained the fresh air, Miss Legrand and I directed our course homewards, but all that I could

say

say (and to speak the truth I made but an awkward piece of work of it) was insufficient to divert away the gloom which overspread her lovely countenance—several times she appeared lost in thought, and gave some strange incoherent replies to my observations—then suddenly recollecting herself, and the error she had fallen into, she tried, but under circumstances of evident perplexity, to explain it—I saw her confusion, and thought the only method of relieving her was by shifting the subject.

Yet sometimes I fancied that she seemed inclined in return for the confidence I had reposed in her, to disclose some particulars of her own situation—I have since been angry with myself that I did not give her an opportunity to do it, though I would not for the world have trespassed a moment on the delicacy due to her exalted sensibility---if such another occasion, so happily calculated for the purpose, should fall in my way, I will endeavour better to improve it.

By the time we reached the vale it was growing dusk, and as my lovely fellow-wanderer seemed somewhat fatigued,

tigued, I conducted her to her brother's, and at the gate of the Abbey-house we parted.

She is now in the calm enjoyment of delicious slumbers--Oh may guardian angels incessantly watch over and protect her, and in justice to innocence and virtue shelter one lovely creature from the storms of life---for me--if hope is not spreading its gaudy delusions to deceive me, I think—but I dare not anticipate the smiles of fortune---already have I courted the fickle goddess, and when I thought I succeeded her, and that the cup of joy was ready for my lips,

“ ’Twas dash’d with gall by some left-handed god.”

I shall see the fair arbitress of my fate to-morrow, and if no predilection has usurped a place in her gentle bosom, I will only say, your friend---your Fortescue shall once more be a candidate for happiness,

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

TO MISS COURTNEY.

THE ABBEY-HOUSE.—*Monday.*

WE are likely to meet very soon, Eleanor, or I could such a tale unfold respecting Mr. Fortescue, that would interest every faculty of your soul.

Ah, my dear, this amiable man is a widower, and his last sudden journey from the vale was to visit his lady in her last moments—they had been parted some time, and never met till a death-bed presented to the best of husbands, a beautiful and accomplished woman, cut off at the age of twenty-one a melancholy victim to dishonour and shame.—Gracious heaven, Eleanor, it is really true that Fortescue flew into this seclusion to lament the infidelity of his wife!

I shall give you the particulars hereafter.

Honored with his confidence (for he has unreservedly unbosomed the whole
E. melancholy

melancholy secret) I now feel an interest in his happiness which only could result from the sincerity of friendship—I glory in declaring it, Eleanor, and that I feel the friendship which glows in my bosom towards this amiable man severely wounded by the prospect of our intercourse being cut off *in its infancy!*—

However, I obey—and on Monday next shall take my departure—I am informed the coach passes Salt-Hill between four and five in the afternoon on Saturday, about which time a servant may be in waiting for me at the wind-mill.

Adieu—my Eleanor—till we meet,
Invariably yours,

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER XXI.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

KEONCAER-VALE.

THERE has been such tempestuous weather for this week past, such incessant deluges of heavy rain that we have

have been almost inundated in our humble valley, and of course all communication with the families here has necessarily been suspended.

It will take some days to repair these ravages so as to put the country into a condition to afford a certain description of rambles an opportunity to repeat their evening interviews—you understand what I am alluding to, and may conceive what your friend must have suffered in being so long confined at home without once beholding the lovely Julia.

How mortifying, Frederic, to have our intercourse cut off at the moment when it was ripening into the tenderness of friendship.

The wind has however shifted this morning, and the day has been upon the whole rather pleasant.

I mean presently to take a ramble, and if possible shall make my way towards the vicarage—but unless Julia Legrand happens to be in the same mind for a walk at the same time, I might as well stay where I am.

I shall fold up this letter ready to be delivered to the post-man in the morning,

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since

since it is very unlikely that I may be in the humour when I come home to take up my pen.

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE SAME.

KEONCAER-VALE.

SHE is gone! the lovely star that irradiated these gloomy regions has disappeared, and all is a cheerless blank.

That happy evening I wrote about was the last—it was the crisis of Fortescue's felicity here.

I am coward enough to rail at the elements for the share they have had in my disappointment.

Frederic, I seem singled out for fate malevolently to sport with.

Yet Mrs. Davenport says the dear girl wept, and left “*a tender memorial of her regret for Mr. Fortescue.*”

These were Miss Legrand's own words

words—Mrs. Davenport was very particular in reciting them.

I was prevented last night from taking my walk to the vicarage, but this evening a beautiful sun shed its reflecting rays around the valley, and my eager steps hastened me thither—I entered the parlour in which we were wont to assemble—Mrs. Davenport was alone—I enquired after the rest of the party—Mr. Percival was well—Mr. Davenport was amusing himself with his gun, and Miss Legrand—surely I knew what was become of her—here a sigh stole from my charming friend, and I had instantly a foreboding---a chillness came over me---I sunk into thought---Mrs. Davenport relieved me from suspense by informing me that Miss Legrand left the Abbey-house early in the morning--that the chaise came round with her to receive the parting regrets of her friends at the vicarage, and that the dear girl's eyes faithfully spoke the anguish of her heart---“ Ah Mr. Fortescue,” continued Mrs. Davenport, “ how her friends at Windsor are to be envied the acquisition of such a companion?”

I heard her and was silent---my agitation was violent, and yet I was secretly satisfied that no one but Mrs. Davenport observed it.

"I always honored Mr. Fortescue's penetration" resumed the amiable woman, "and it is no unwelcome testimony of his sensibility when he regrets in common with us, the loss of so charming an associate."

She sat down to the piano-forte to try to amuse me, and played one of Miss Legrand's favourite airs---Mrs. Davenport has exquisite taste, but Julia Legrand's notes had a different effect upon me.

Before she had finished, the rest of our party assembled, and all our converse was on the merits of the lovely absentee.

"A tender memorial of her regret for Mr. Fortescue"---there is something in this sentence which I would fain glean a favourable interpretation from.

She has promised to write to Mrs. Davenport immediately on her arrival at Windsor, and they have mutually pledged themselves to support a punctual correspondence.

By this means I shall hear of her.

I take

I take some comfort in remembering that Miss Legrand and I parted, mutually pleased with, and mutually confiding in each other—she wept over my tale of misfortune, and that was a feast of sensibility which my enamoured soul ardently dwells on.

You know my natural impatience, Frederic, for you have often been tormented with the inconvenient effects of it---I count the days---the hours---till a letter arrives---and if a gleam of comfort comes with it, I will instantly impart it to my friend.

I do not forget your Harriot---say every thing to her that friendship like mine can suggest.

Yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MRS. DAVENPORT,

At the Vicarage in KEONCAER-VALE.

Windsor.

I OPEN our correspondence, dear Emily, with sensations of uncommon

F 4

plea-

pleasure, for independent of the value of your friendship, methinks the remembrance of the happy hours I have passed in the vale, clings to my heart with animated preference, and it feels no gratification so exquisite as when it retraces those delightful scenes.

The weather was very unfavourable, and the roads in many places almost impassable from the heavy rains which have of late deluged the country—but had it been otherwise I should have been lost to any enjoyment—Ah Mrs. Davenport, who would have thought that a slender sojournment of a few weeks in Wales, in a place where at first all whom I am now so affectionately attached to, were entire strangers to me, could fill my heart with such regret at leaving it.

I have a charming friend here from whose jealous eyes I must conceal this avowal, but indeed I love her not less than ever, nor are my affections weakened by being divided.

Oh Emily, how faithfully does my busy fancy rove to the favorite spot I have abandoned—to the happy seat of hospitality and content—to the oak parlour

parlour opening on the lawn, where the chearful converse of the venerable divine, the sprightly sallies of my much-loved friend, and the wit and graces of the charming Fortescue, beguiled the fleeting hours—happily conformable to the wishes of his guests, I hear the worthy Mr. Percival retrace the livelier adventures of youth—I listen to Mr. Fortescue's comments on the manners and customs of men, whilst he describes with easy eloquence the sufferings of the freezing Laplander, or the parched Indian in the sultry desert—now is he dwelling with elegant enthusiasm on the extensive empire of science, or lamenting the fettered prejudices of contracted ignorance---now is Mrs. Davenport enlarging on the virtues of the sacred sisterhood, the chosen refuge from guilt and oppression, and recalling the tranquil hours she passed in her seclusion from the world, forgetting and forgot---now---but whither does my greedy imagination transport me? Ah how eagerly dwells my pen on the delicious theme!

Did you communicate my parting message to Mr. Fortescue? I have condemned myself for not snatching some opportunity to take leave of him---he might think it unkind, but you know I could not help it.——

My friends here rally me on the seriousness which they say I have lately assumed---they lead me into fashionable circles, where gaiety and mirth preside, but I return insensible to pleasure---they take me with them into the park, the walks are pleasant, but they appear to be regulated by forms, and devoted to the purposes of art---they are not like the humble vallies of Keoncaer---in vain I look for the romantic recesses of nature, the shades of rural simplicity.

Do not forget me, dear Mrs. Davenport---my chief solace will result from your correspondence---I shall always rely on your faithful report of me to my friends in the vale---you can never say how much I think of them.

Write then, my much-esteemed Emily, as often as possible, and knowing how interested I am in all the events of a place

so dear to me, surely you will not be sparing of intelligence.

Adieu,

I am with real affection yours,

JULIA LEGRAND.

I write by the same post to my brother.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MISS LEGRAND AT WINDSOR.

THE VALE — *Tuesday.*

CEREMONY and custom will pronounce it a trespass on their established forms, when Fortescue addresses Miss Legrand by letter—it may be so, but suffer me, loveliest of women, to contend that there are partial circumstances in the present instance which will be found to afford extenuation.

And the privilege of friendship is the plea I offer.

Yes, madam, I have been proud enough to believe, or rather to indulge some kind of hope that as a friend I am not entirely indifferent to you.—Your sensibility took alarm when I unbosomed
my

my story, and there was an interesting sympathy in your emotions which made directly to my heart—then began the triumph of friendship, and I felt all that you could wish me--but what my feelings were when I had the blisful testimony under your own dear hand that Fortescue's society was remembered with pleasure, I own myself incapable of declaring.

Indeed, Miss Legrand, you are not the only sufferer by your division from the vale;—we all mourn our irremediable loss, but none, I am sure, feel it so exquisitely as Fortescue.

Cruel Julia! not to deal more ingenuously with your *friend*.—I had a right to know you had determined to forsake us.

Yet let me not call her cruel for withholding that which it was the most gracious act of humanity to conceal.

I enjoyed whilst it lasted, the sweet delusion.

And Miss Legrand's generous mention of me in her letter to Mrs. Davenport, ought to counter-balance the misery I endured when I found that delusion vanished.

Yet

Yet if I had known it was irrevocably determined that she was to forsake us, I would have sued for some happy testimonial of perpetuating friendship—such as honor might ask for, and virtue and delicacy bestow—I would have implored permission to talk with my lovely friend by letter, and by a mutual interchange of sentiment, mature a friendship to which my pride, and my honor would have been firmly rivetted.---Ah say Miss Legrand, would the sordid lessons of a suspicious world have been suffered to prevail over the generous impulse of sensibility?

I know your reply, for I know you have a mind superior to prejudice.

Then here, thus I entreat you to let your devoted Fortescue at least participate in your valuable correspondence---honor me, dearest Julia, with one letter, one line---only say that you are well and happy, and the benignant act will dispense comfort to us all, but no one more than your admiring,

FORTESCUE.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

TO MISS LEGRAND.

The Vicarage in KEONCAER-VALE.

THE early attention our amiable Julia has paid to her promises of remembering her distant friends, is highly flattering to us---we deal not in compliments, dear Miss Legrand----our sentiments are undisguised, and every tribute we offer is directly from the heart.

You have absolutely deranged our little party beyond the likelihood of its ever again being set to rights---we meet, it is true, but it is to unbosom our regrets together.

My worthy uncle continually calls for the lovely fugitive, and do you know I think I lose ground in his favor---positively he fixes upon Julia Legrand as the standard of perfection, and all our merits are but admitted in a comparative sense---if I play any favourite lessons or airs, he honors me with a kind of formal passive approbation, but says or seems to say that

Miss

Miss Legrand, were she here, could do it better.

Beloved then as you evidently are by all to whom you are known, what say you to a proposition I am charged to make to your friends at Windsor---it is this---that you shall pass three months with them, and the like time with us alternately in the vale.

This is so reasonable a proposal, and shews on our parts such an accommodating disposition, that if they close not with it, I shall positively pronounce them a selfish set unworthy my Julia's regard.

Fortescue is in raptures at this scheme, and earnestly recommends it to your consideration---on my word, Julia, the man is almost beside himself, and from what he threatens, I think he will have the temerity to write to you.

Be satisfied, my dear, of my unabating esteem, and that the sincerity of it will always keep me punctual to my correspondence---nay more, Julia, if you will with all convenient dispatch return us an engagement under your own hand that you will close with our proposals, I will devote some of my letters to the purpose

I pro-

I promised---and in retracing the earlier scenes of my life you will find my fate has been strangely chequered---certain it is that some singular vicissitudes must have occurred to have induced me to escape from the convent at Valognes after I had taken the veil---but through every visitation of misfortunes you will observe the benevolent hand of providence has been signally held out to protect me.

Remember, my Julia, we have agreed to let no more than two posts elapse between our letters.

I have a thousand things to say to you, but what with the united intreaties of my uncle, my husband and Mr. Fortescue, to speak of them to you as they feel, I am really perplexed how to acquit myself---they admire and esteem, and are always talking of you---there---I need say no more, but that I am on my own private account,

Very affectionately your,

EMILY DAVENPORT.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

WINDSOR.—*Thursday.*

I HAVE ever been taught to resist the tyranny of custom---conscious innocence spurns its contracted laws, and serenely smiles in its own security.

Equally irreconcilable to an ingenuous mind are the low artifices of dissimulation.

I have convinced Mr. Fortescue, that I had at least discernment enough to admire his virtues; but when he confidentially unbosomed his melancholy secret, every faculty of my soul was aroused, and the sympathy I offered him was the pure and earliest tribute of friendship.

In return for this friendship, the genuine offering of an innocent heart, will Mr. Fortescue forget himself so far as to delude me into an act which may hereafter lay a foundation for self-reproach?---no---his character is uniformly amiable---doubt and suspicion vanish before him,
and

and with them the cold dictates of reserve.

I owe you, Sir, much for your letter--- I owe my dear friends at the Vicarage more than a long life of unceasing gratitude can ever discharge.

I cannot say that I am well or happy--- these scenes are ill calculated to secure ME peace or tranquillity.

I had Mrs. Davenport's affectionate letter this morning---alas, I fear her generous intentions in my favour will be defeated---I hinted to my friends here my wishes to return into Wales, but they seemed determined to oppose them, and, (in a way which I felt unfriendly) ridiculed the idea.

Be kind enough, Mr. Fortescue, to tell Mrs. D. that I shall answer her letter in a day or two---or rather say nothing about it.

Yet she will know I have written to *you*, and may expect me to take some notice of the subject of her last---tell her if you please, that I shall have an opportunity of communicating my sentiments to her freely in my next.

And

And oh may the choicest of heaven's blessings be for ever showered over your happy roof, ye dear amiable friends, and could Julia Legrand be indulged in the first, the prevailing wish of her heart, it should be to pass her days in undisturbed serenity in Keoncaer-Vale.---Say then, does not this prove my affectionate attachment to it, and proportionably manifest what I must suffer in being divided from it?

Adieu—dear Sir,

I am faithfully yours,

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER XXVII.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

THE VALE.

I TOLD you in my last* how tenderly the dear girl expressed herself in her letter to Mrs. Davenport.

Read in the enclosed transcripts † the

* This letter does not appear in the collection.

† See letters XXIV. and XXVI.

triumph

triumph of sensibility and innocence over prejudice and suspicion.

I have met with a singular adventure to-day, but am not in the humour to write—to-morrow may possibly be better accommodated to domestic purposes, and if so I shall devote the greater part of it to the gratification of your curiosity, and when I tell you that the occasion will warrant its being excited, you will suppose I have something particular to communicate.

Best remembrances to Harriot,

Ever yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

KEONCAER-VALE.

THE day has turned out as I expected, wet and gloomy, and I have taken my place by the fire-side, rather peevish, I believe, but in a tolerable humour for scribbling.

Ever

Ever since the happy hours I passed with Miss Legrand in the wood, I have felt myself unaccountably attached to it—I explore its recesses, I pause at the well-remembered spot where the dear girl's agitation had nearly overcome her—I sigh—but find a secret gratification in the uninterrupted indulgence of my melancholy.

In one of these solitary rambles I had insensibly brought myself to the cavern where dwelt the aged sybil of the wood—the mild silence of the evening, the calm serenity of the scene around, and the picturesque features of nature were exactly suitable to a romantic imagination, and I felt disposed to indulge in the eccentricities of fancy---it was a favourable opportunity for a visit into the cavern, and I determined to have a further conference with its venerable inhabitant---yet unwilling to be noticed by any one who might interpret my curiosity into weakness, I turned warily round two or three times to satisfy myself that I was unobserved, and finding the coast clear at last I ventured in---I had just passed the mouth of the cave, and was directing my
course

course forwards when I suddenly heard the cries of a female, and it instantly occurred to me that possibly some ruffian might be committing violence on a defenceless fair one, and that Providence had directed me thither to relieve her---this may sound like the language of antient knight-errantry, but I was too well convinced that it was a real occasion, to lose a moment in determining to afford my assistance, and I called out as loud as I could---the reverberation of the sound through the hollow cavities had a very awful effect.—All was quiet, and I should have repeated my call with increased energy, but at the instant my old friend the prophetess made her appearance, “Heaven be praised, “worthy Sir, that you are come,” said she, “I am in a woeful quandary within “—there’s a poor creature with a child “whom I found about an hour ago just by, “fainting and forlorn, and I verily believe she must have perished if I had not “come to her relief, she has just had a terrible fit—doubtless a strange disaster “must have befallen her, for she seems, “and I dare say is of some consequence
“—come

“---come in, good Sir, and talk with her
 “---we may together be of service to the
 “poor sufferer---Ah, Sir, though I am
 “what you see, my roof is always ready
 “to shelter the wretched!”

I readily accepted the invitation, and was soon conducted to the interior apartment where but a few evenings since I had been blessed with the presence of the lovely Julia Legrand---there sat the poor pale object with a beautiful little boy about a year old stretched on her feeble knees---she made an effort to rise at my approach but instantly sunk down again ---“be of good cheer, lady,” said our ancient hostess, “and bear up against troubles---this is a worthy 'squire whom chance has brought to see us, and we won't let you give way to despair---thank God that it fell in my way to assist you.”

On a slight survey of the fair stranger, I was convinced that Mrs. Bell was not mistaken in the notion she had formed of her having moved in a superior station---a very tender glance discovered the ruins of beauty and eloquence, and the more I observed her, the more reason I had to be assured that she was of no
 common

common rank---there was an easy delicacy in her address, an expression in her countenance, and withal a dignity in her deportment that commanded respect, though the first impulse might be compassion---fainting and reduced, she seemed for some time incapable of attending to the homely but sincere language of our venerable dame, but at length lifting up her languid eyes (the brilliance of which seemed to have been but lately obscured) she made an effort to express her acknowledgments---I saw it was a painful exertion, and in a manner which I meant should be respectful, I intreated her to forbear and be composed---that I had happily the power of rescuing her from distress if it were possible for human aid to succour her, and that on every occasion of this nature I always derived so much gratification as to become myself the person obliged.

“That you are an Englishman, Sir,” said she, “is enough to make me pay every credit to your humanity---I am a foreigner---but I know the generosity of your country to be proverbial---possibly had I met with your benevolent assistance sooner,

fooner, it might have availed---now it's too late.—Yet this little innocent may want a friend—he is all adversity has left me—let a wretched mother plead for him whilst she has yet the power of speech--- he will soon be an orphan.”——

Here nature overpowered the exhausted sufferer, and she sunk backwards.

By the skilful attention of good Mrs. Bell, she presently recovered, but seemed lost to any recollection of what had passed—she stared wildly about her, and in incoherent and broken sentences demanded where she was, and whom she was amongst.—The infant had been carefully placed on the bed, and was in a sound sleep—she asked for her child, and we assured her it was safe and comfortable--- she cast her eyes towards it, and seemed satisfied—there was an agitation and wildness over her countenance which I was apprehensive would bring on another fainting fit---and I thought it adviseable to recommend it to the old lady to undress her patient and put her into bed—this counsel she cordially approved of, and on taking my leave I put a trifle into her hand, and told her that I would de-

fray any expences she might be put to in compleating her office of kindness---“I have a bottle or two,” said she, “of excellent made wine, of the virtue of which I have had numberless testimonies---I shall administer some of this to her, and if I can cheat her into a little sleep, there will be no doubt of her getting about again—poor creature, hunger and fatigue are severe enemies to encounter with!”—

I promised to call again in the course of the evening, and took my leave.

My mind was so fully occupied with this singular circumstance, that I wandered away thoughtless and inattentive to the course I was taking, and presently found myself on the skirt of the wood that opened towards the heath, before me at a distance I discerned a solitary fabric which seemed by a scanty sign near it to denote accommodation for travellers.—what the sign was I was at a loss even on a nearer survey to discover, for time had made very free with the design of the artist—here however I arrived, and refreshed myself with a little humble ale—a few straggled peasants had collected themselves together, invited by the care-dispelling draught, and

and were all occasionally exercising their various talents of loquacity when I entered—a silence took place on my appearance, and I saw I was a restraint on their mirth---this I endeavoured to do away by familiarly intreating them not to let my presence be the means of disturbing them---they had sense enough to understand me, and civility enough to desire me to excuse them for asking me to be seated with them---I did so, and the conversation proceeded as brisk as before.

It was some minutes before I could rightly understand the subject they were so busily engaged upon, but at length I found it to be no other than my old friend of the cave Mrs. Judy Bell.

These people unanimously agreed in pronouncing her character to be uniformly generous and good, the earlier part of her life no one remembered, nor could they dive any farther into her concerns than to know she had remained the undisturbed possessor of her cell for many years---some recollected her famous feats of necromancy when they were boys, and others had heard her name mentioned by their fires---every one admitted

she had done a great deal of good---that she picked up plenty of money in the exercise of her talents (which were of various kinds) and that she was of a humane and charitable disposition, and always ready to do every one a kindness.

This favorable report of Mrs. Bell's disposition and good qualities was very acceptable to me, and my mind recurring the circumstance of the fair stranger, I was glad to find she had obtained so salutary an asylum.

Having passed the best part of an hour there, I thought of resuming my walk, and revisiting the cave, to learn the issue of its benevolent hostess's attention. It never occurred to me that I should most likely find some difficulty in making my way there through the interior recesses of the wood, unless I could retrace that part of it which I was accustomed to, and from which I had secured a certain path that led directly to the cavern---however I am not apt to be disconcerted by little accidents of this nature, and away I rambled.

Whether I was more than usually absent, or that I mistook my direction I know

know not, but after having wandered about the wood for near two hours, I found myself at the very spot where I entered from the heath after my visit to the resort of the peasants---their little rendezvous was again in view, and I could not but be vexed to find I had been so stupidly, and so unprofitably employed.

I now took a regular course through the wood in one certain direction, and came at last to a spot that was familiar to me---from thence I made my way easy enough to the cave---Mrs. Bell welcomed me very earnestly, and with great pleasure assured me her patient was better, and she dared say would be glad to talk with me, as she had recollected my goodness to her, and seemed to have a very grateful sense of it.---

We used but little ceremony in the introduction---the fair stranger received me with becoming grace, and told me whilst I was seated by her side that she discerned something in my countenance which could not be mistaken for idle curiosity.---“I am under great obligations to you, Sir,” said she “for the generous interest you have taken

in my recovery---I have not been long inured to miseries of this nature---Normandy gave me birth, and it is only about fourteen months since my sad destiny threw me on your shores---I am indeed, Sir, of no common rank---but I have deserved my disgrace---I am an ungrateful disobedient girl---the Baron D'A---it is my father, and the wretched outcast now beside you was once the flattered favoured Adelaide."

"I wish, madam, for no explanations---it suffices that you are unfortunate---a benevolent mind thinks *that* a sufficient passport to its protection---when you are better able to relate to me, as to a friend who is anxious for your happiness, the circumstances which have involved you in this dreadful calamity, I will listen to you with the partiality of friendship, in the meantime with calmness and tranquillity reconcile yourself to the comforts of hope---you shall see better days, and shall yourself live to cherish your lovely innocent---the worthy matron of this place will afford you every thing necessary to restore you, and when you are able to remove you shall find a better shelter

shelter ready to receive you---at a little distance from hence is the vale of Keoncaer, where I reside at present---thither we will contrive to convey you, and amongst some of your own sex you shall have every opportunity of being happy."---

"I ought to thank heaven that in you, Sir, I have secured a refuge for my little one; for myself, I certainly will endeavour to live to repay your generosity---three days had we subsisted on a few halfpence which the bounty of a promiscuous traveller supplied us with---but it was all gone, nature was quite worn out, and I tottered into the shelter of this wood to die."---

"Since Providence has averted so melancholy an event, I trust you will make such a return for its interposition as to struggle yet a little longer against your misfortunes---We will take care to make the rest of your days comfortable---when I say they shall be *happy* I may perhaps exceed the ability of humanity---to-morrow I shall make you another visit, and in the mean time give this good woman an opportunity to tell me that

you have followed my friendly counsels ---you will then meet me with the advantage of recruited health and spirits."---

Having commended her to the care of the worthy dame (which by the bye was unnecessary) I took my leave, and made my way through the wood to the vale---though the adventure was of an interesting nature, I forbore mentioning a syllable of it, rather chusing to wait the issue of a day or two.—

The next morning I betook me again to Mrs. Bell's, and had the satisfaction to find her fair patient a good deal recovered—there was already a tinge, rather faintly diffused over her cheek, which seemed to denote the return of health.—
 “I am blest, Sir,” said she, “with uncommon spirits, and but for them must inevitably have long since been overpowered with grief---my story is long---if I continue recovering, which I think I shall, I will endeavour to commit it to paper, and you will then be at leisure to peruse it—such a recital might exhaust me too much, yet I would fain gratify your curiosity---because perhaps I have
 some

some secret pride in wishing to convince you that I have been more unfortunate than criminal."

I felt inexpressible pleasure at the alteration in the appearance of the fair foreigner, and though I certainly had a strong curiosity to discover what misfortunes had so sorely afflicted a beautiful girl at her age, I told her I should consider it a trespass on humanity to urge any thing on the subject at present.

Mrs. Bell's vigilant and unwearied attention to this poor creature has impressed me with such a sense of her goodness, that I really wish to be a friend to her—never was anxiety more manifest than she discovered from the first, and the more I see of my venerable friend of the cave, the more I am convinced that under the garb of humble poverty she hides something of superior eminence that would have adorned the most exalted character.

I have been prevented taking another ramble into the wood by the wet weather--if this evening should be favourable I shall venture--if not, the first opportunity.

There, Frederic, is a whole morning's work!---

I am yours sincerely,
AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XXVII.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

WINDSOR.—*Tuesday.*

SIR,

HAVING a particular interest in all the concerns of a beloved friend of mine, Miss Julia Legrand, I am desired by my mother to take the liberty of acquainting you that she highly disapproves of her entering into a correspondence with a *gentleman*, who is a stranger to our family, and that she expects to owe to his politeness and good sense, an immediate discontinuance of it.

Miss Legrand, Sir, has engagements of a very serious nature which render such an intercourse highly unbecoming.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ELEANOR COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MRS. DAVENPORT,

At the Vicarage in KEONCAER-VALE.

WINDSOR.—*Wednesday*.

THERE is a sad something in the destiny of your friend which keeps her wedded to inquietude, and for ever subject to the most trying disappointments---the dear delights which my heart fondly anticipated in a correspondence with my much-loved friends in Keoncaer-vale are now snatched from me, and I am told I must determine to forget them---alas, my Emily, the attachment I declared to you, is too nearly interwoven with my existence, for one to give way without the other!

At the death of our parents, my brother and I were left under the guardianship of Major Courtney (the father of my fair friend here) and Stanley Hamilton, Esq. of the Temple---*me* it was judged expedient to place in the house of the former gentleman, where at an early age (for I was

was scarce eight years old when I became an orphan) I cultivated a friendship with my favorite Eleanor, which increased with our ripening years, and I must ever give her credit for the sincere affection she has shewn on every occasion where my happiness or my interest was concerned--at the death of the Major, Mrs. Courtney continued me under her fostering protection, and I should be ungrateful indeed if I did not own that she has supplied with fond fidelity the place of my departed mother--my little fortune is in the hands of Mr. Hamilton, but owing to the unsuccessful issue of a law suit respecting my late father's right to a share in some mines in-----it is reduced to little more than 3000l.---Under the care of Mrs. Courtney, and a worthy creature (a Mrs. Godfrey, who has been attached to me from my infancy, and to whom my expiring mother consigned me) I have remained for many years, and Mrs. Courtney on that account claims a sort of privilege to regulate my conduct by her notions of prosperity and discretion.

In the fullness of my heart I communicated to Miss Courtney the contents of
your

your letter---and she saw one I received from Mr. Fortescue---Ah Emily---there sprung the source of my sufferings!---the circumstances of my attachment to the vale were seriously and formally investigated, and the result is that I must decline the correspondence.

This is a hard mandate, Emily---at the moment I write this my tears fall fast on my paper, and speak the deep sorrow which overwhelms my heart.

We leave Windsor, I find on Sunday next---the Royal Family having removed to town, the place seems deserted---after staying about a fortnight in London we are to set off for a family seat of Mrs. Courtney's, somewhere near the sea-coast in Devonshire---and there it seems we are to pass away the dull hours of cheerless Winter.

A fine prospect for your poor friend, my dear!

Yet the place would be of little consequence, and I could reconcile myself to any situation had the humble privilege of corresponding with any friends in the vale been reserved to me---destitute of that I tremble at the trial---I long for
your

your counsel, Emily, but how to get it I know not—I despise the little artifices of dissimulation—my friends here know how far they can rely on my integrity—and anything like duplicity on my part would look like a consciousness of error.

I have declared my intention of writing to you, and I shall make no secret that I have done so—you shall hear again from me soon—Ah my dear where is Mr. Fortescue?—Yet I am asking a question without hopes of an answer---I had better only say that I am dearly and unalterably yours,

JULIA LEGRAND.

LETTER XXIX.

(Before the two last Letters had been received in the Vale.)

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

KEONCAER-VALE.—*Wednesday.*

MY pen has lain nearly a fortnight neglected, which, considering the use I have been of late accustomed to make of it, may appear extraordinary---
but

but I have within these few days been so busily engaged in the concerns of the fair foreigner, and I have at this moment such a croud of incidents to relate, that I hardly know where to begin or how to arrange them—but in order to be as methodical as possible, I will commence my narrative from the date of my last letter, and proceed progressively forwards.

I am now in possession of the beautiful stranger's history in her own hand-writing, a copy of which I shall transmit to you in my next, but there are some leading circumstances with which it will be necessary to make you acquainted, to prepare you for what has happened within these few days in the circle of this humble valley.

In the course of two or three further visits to the cave, I had the satisfaction to find the fair wanderer almost perfectly restored, and it is but justice to declare that when the roses were re-established on her cheeks I never beheld a more beautiful creature—she had hinted to me some circumstances respecting her family (the name of which I remembered to have heard at Caen in my last excursion through

through the country) and in order to furnish a pretence to assist her with money, and run no risk of offending her delicacy, I told her I had an opportunity thro' the channel of a correspondent at Caen of getting reimbursed any sum she might have occasion for, but it was not till after I had become possessed of the particulars of her history that she would accept my offer, nor could I prevail on her then to suffer me to furnish her with more than was sufficient to provide a change of raiment for herself and little one—the child was lovely beyond description.

It now became expedient to propose removing her from the cave to a situation less gloomy, and more calculated for her accommodation—I own I had some scruples about introducing her into the vale. I feared my intentions would be misconstrued, and that it might give birth to conjectures favorable to the purposes of scandal—at any rate it was impossible to attempt it until I had previously explained the circumstances to Mrs. Davenport, or the good vicar, and as yet I had not revealed a syllable on the subject.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bell was of the same opinion, and readily took upon herself to remove every difficulty of the kind by providing an asylum at a solitary farm-house on the moor-side; —the place she told me was of a very inferior quality, but would serve for the present to shelter our young friend from the intrusions of impertinent curiosity.

Thither accordingly she was conducted, and the place very faithfully answered the description Mrs. Bell had given of it as to its being solitary and cheerless, but she might have gone further, and enlarged on the singular neatness (almost bordering on elegance) which was conspicuous thro' every part of the dwelling.

Yet this was a lonely fabric obscurely situated on the barren margin of a dreary moor — the eye was seldom amused with the sight of an human being, unless some wandering peasant accidentally passed, or some misguided traveller, invited by the appearance of a shelter, strayed there for information.

The mistress of this lowly mansion very complacently welcomed her fair guest, and appropriated a neat little parlour

lour which opened into a garden that had been cultivated on the side of the cottage, to her use---a few vegetables were planted about it, and in the centre rose a little mount, where the fresh green turf regaled the eye with an agreeable appearance of verdure.

Having introduced our lovely stranger into this comfortable dwelling, there I must leave her --- you will peruse her history (which my next letter shall convey to you) before I can proceed forwards, or I should necessarily destroy the effect of an incident of an interesting nature which has afforded me inexpressible pleasure, and brought about a change in the circumstances of the fair wanderer which I trust will eventually be the means of restoring her to happiness and to herself.

I have not quite transcribed the story, but by Sunday's post I will dispatch it.

And have I, Frederic, been thus indulging my rebel pen with suffering it to be employed on a female subject, without one thought---one sigh sacred to Julia Legrand?---Ah, my friend, in serving this unfortunate stranger, I am merely an
agent

agent in the cause of humanity—but sensations of a different nature thrill through my frame when I think on my lovely fugitive.---All is silent---but we expect every day to hear from her, and there is not a post arrives that my impatient footsteps hurry me not to the vicarage--but for this unexpected adventure with the lady in the wood I think I should long since have been in the same town with Julia---to live from her is impossible!

Adieu,

Ever yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

L E T T E R X X X .

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

THE VALE.—*Thursday.*

I Enclose you the promised narrative. You will observe that it was written previous to my acquaintance with the unfortunate heroine, and if the hospitable matron of the cave had not been providentially sent to her succour, in all probability she would have expired on
the

the spot, and the manuscript, like the memoirs of BENIGNUS, would have become "*the property of the first traveller.*"

My next letter will throw a farther light on some circumstances in the fair adventurer's story,---I am at present too much depressed by a renewal of my own private misfortunes, to be able to send it to you by this conveyance.---

---Oh, Frederic, Julia Legrand is lost to your friend---for ever lost---our intercourse, which I contemplated with pleasure and with pride, is suddenly cut off by the selfish, suspicious, sordid wretches, she is doomed to be subservient to---and long before this they have removed the dear girl from Windsor, and consigned her to some dismal retreat on the sea-coast in the West of England, where her beauty and accomplishments are to

"Waste their sweetness on the desert air."

Weary of a place which was only agreeable to me whilst Julia Legrand enlivened it with her fascinating presence, or whilst I fondly flattered myself with sometimes hearing *from* or at least *of* her,
I have

I have determined to bid adieu to Wales, and try the effects of travel on my shattered mind--the novelty of untried scenes may perhaps amuse me, or at any rate arrest the gloomy progress of reflexion.

In my late tour on the Continent I visited most parts of France, Germany, Holland and Flanders---of course those scenes are too familiar to me to furnish that kind of variety necessary to recreate me----but whilst I was at Paris in the summer of 1777---I remember to have had a letter from an old school-fellow of ours (Charles Ellercamp) to inform me that he was married and settled at Frisbourg in Switzerland, and he enforced a very friendly invitation by some pleasing descriptions of the romantic curiosities that country abounds with---my passion however, for such sort of novelties was then nearly gratified, and I declined it---*now* that necessity seems to have reconciled my inclination that way, I think of taking a trip thither---and if in the revolution of human affairs, my friend should have left the place, I have still a reserve in an English family resident at Geneva, with whom I know I can sojourn a few months.

Yet

Yet think not, Frederic, that I would tamely abandon so precious a pursuit, satisfied as I am that the lovely girl has something more than a common partiality for me, but I foresee so many difficulties, and am so thoroughly convinced that some fatal destiny still hangs over me, that absolutely discourages me.

Next week I bid adieu to the vale---I bid adieu to the delusive phantoms of a fond imagination---I bid adieu to every hope of possessing the best and most beloved of women---in passing through London, in my way to Harwich, I shall pay you and your Harriot the affectionate devoirs of unabating friendship---my next will inform you when to expect me,

Yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

THE HISTORY OF ADELAIDE.*

(In a cover a good deal worn, containing the Manuscript, the following was written with pale ink in English.)

“ **W**ORN down with sorrow and
 “ wretchedness, and unable longer to
 “ struggle

* Written in French.

“struggle against the severity of my
“fate, I seek a shelter for myself and
“little one—in DEATH!

“Friendless and forsaken as I am, my
“family is of distinction in France, and
“should my hard-hearted father ever
“hear of the miserable end of his ill-
“fated child, if he drops but one tear it
“will be sufficient—I wish him no sen-
“sation more painful than that tear must
“be occasioned by.

“Should this chance to fall into the
“hands of any humane creature who af-
“ter perusing my sad story may be dis-
“posed to deposit my remains, and those
“of my little one, decently in the earth,
“there is scarcely a doubt but they may
“one day be requited.

A. D'O——.”

HISTORY OF ADELAIDE.

“**T**HE Chateau D'A——y which
stands on a delightful eminence about
five leagues distant from the city of *Caen*
in Normandy, has been long the fa-
mily

mily seat of my ancestors, and to this day no common honors are attached to the name of D'A——y---. My grandfather, the Baron, was eminently distinguished among the reigning favourites at Court in the reign of Louis the XIVth. and was particularly patronized by the celebrated Marchioness of Pompadour, whilst that lady was suffered to control the politics of France—but there is sooner or later a fatality incidental to Court-favoritism, which was peculiarly exemplified in the present instance, for when my grandfather had attained the most splendid and dignified stations, and thought his power supremely established, he discovered some secret circumstances in the movement of the grand state machine, which he deemed incompatible with the confidence he conceived himself entitled to, and he determined, disgusted, to abandon the Court, and devote the remainder of his days to retirement.”

“ This castle was the chosen seat of his seclusion, and here his chief attention was directed to the education of an only son, the father of the unworthy *Adelaide*. ”

“ With the honors of an illustrious
name,

name, my father inherited a considerable patrimony, and at a very early age intermarried with the daughter of a veteran officer of distinction—a young lady of exquisite beauty and accomplishments—but their happiness was of very transitory date, the Baroness being seized with the small-pox within a few months after her marriage, and notwithstanding every effort was exerted to save her, she fell an early and lamented victim.

“The unfortunate issue of this union, however, did not discourage my father from enlisting a second time under the banners of hymen, and I understand that within a year after the death of his first lady, he married Adelaide G——t, the youngest daughter of a neighbouring gentleman of fortune---she had scarcely attained her seventeenth year, but was generally esteemed a girl of fine sense, and possessed a share of personal qualifications.”

“If extensive possessions, an un sullied name, and the homage of the world could have ensured happiness or tranquillity, my father might have basked in the fairest sunshine of fortune---but the grand essentials

H

tials

tials which constitute domestic harmony were wanting---the new Baroness was proud, imperious and impatient of control, whilst my father on his part was hasty, violent and determined, inasmuch that the flames of discontent were incessantly kindling, and furnishing a perpetual source of inquietude and torment."

"Within a year after this ill-proportioned marriage I was born at an hotel of my father's in the city of Caen---and I have too much reason to believe that my unnatural mother considered me from the first a very unwelcome charge."

"As the earlier periods of infancy offered nothing remarkable to relate, I shall pass them over, until the commencement of the more important circumstances of my history ;---at the age of eleven years, it was judged expedient to remove me from home to a convent of the Benedictines at Valognes---in this monastery there is no severe and morose austerity practised, nor any of those narrow contracted principles which are so properly reprobated in religious establishments--- the manners of that sacred sisterhood are invariably directed to conciliate

ciliate the tenets they profess---ever moderate, social and discreet, their conduct is exemplary, and their piety sincere.”

“ Within the walls of this seclusion I had the happiness to cultivate an affectionate attachment to a young English lady about the age of eighteen---when in perfect health she was extremely beautiful, but some severe visitations had banished the roses from her cheeks, and the pale lily was only left to indicate the triumph of affliction.”

“ The partiality of an indulgent parent to an only child was manifest in my father’s conduct towards me, and the best masters that our country afforded had been provided for my instruction, insomuch that amongst other accomplishments I had made considerable progress in the English language---a circumstance which particularly recommended me to my amiable companion, and we were wont to pass our hours inseparably together in a delightful intercourse of confidence and friendship.”

“ Besides this young lady there was an elderly sister in the society who was a native of England. A period of thirty years had elapsed since she first took

shelter in this asylum, and it may seem very extraordinary when I relate that the language of her country was now entirely unknown to her*.—Of her story she was too reserved ever to give us an opportunity of collecting any other information than that her early banishment from the world was owing to a disappointment of that nature which solitude and piety are best calculated to soothe—and there was invariably a firmness, and resignation in her countenance which indeed bespoke the happy triumph of religion.”

“To this lady I was indebted for many salutary admonitions---the pictures she drew of the world at large, and her representations of its chequered scenes, impressed my mind with a philosophic resignation, which, undisturbed, might have secured me content and serenity--
and

* In passing through Valognes, about two years after the Editor became possessed of this manuscript, his curiosity was excited to enquire after this lady, and he had actually a conversation of upwards of an hour with her at the grate—She corroborated this, and some other parts of Adelaide's narrative, and convinced the Editor of the fact of her having really forgot her native language.

and I feel it but justice to declare that the two years I passed in that hallowed retreat, were by far the happiest I have ever known."

"In the person and the history of my beloved Emily, I found that neither beauty, virtue or the most engaging accomplishments were proof against misfortunes--she was the only child of an opulent family in the West of England, and but for too great a share of sensibility which exposed her to the power of the tyrant passion, she might have flourished happily on her native soil--but the rebel heart *will* wander from the strict rules which custom, ceremony, and even duty prescribe, and nothing could prevent her from bestowing her affections on an amiable young soldier destined on the American service, and as if love was ever working its own undoing, his regiment was at that instant under sudden orders to embark, and our reluctant lover was obliged to attend his duty, and leave his forlorn Emily to the mercy of her offended relations."

"Within a year after his departure the news arrived of his having fallen at the

memorable engagement on Bunker's-hill, and this shock, added to the unkind and cruel reproaches of her family, urged the lovely mourner to embrace a monastic life---into our convent she accordingly committed herself, and at the end of a very short probation received the veil with every mark of chearfulness and composure."

"Near two years had witnessed the dear girl's steady and unshaken resignation, and her soul which had been tremblingly alive to other sensations, now felt no solace but in religion, no hope but in futurity."

"But a different kind of destiny was reserved in the bosom of fate for her."

"One afternoon Emily received a message importing that a stranger, apparently an English lady, desired to have an interview with her at the grate---before observed that the forms of our society were by no means ceremoniously strict, and we readily admitted the visits of strangers in a parlor appropriated to the purpose, whenever curiosity or any other occasion induced them to call; and as the
nature

nature of this message rather disconcerted my friend, and impressed her with an unpleasant foreboding, I offered to attend her to the grate—here we found a lady in waiting who appeared to be advanced in years, and whose countenance discovered a mixture of agitation and anxiety---her conversation at first was on different matters, but when we had relieved ourselves from the embarrassments of the moment, the lady, looking earnestly at Emily, began to condole with her on having taken the veil---a step which she said would put it out of the power of fate to dispense what worldly happiness might yet be in store for her.---My sweet friend with a smile of unaffected complacency thanked the stranger for her kind wishes, and the earnestness with which she seemed to interest herself in her favor, but assured her that she had long been in possession of the only comforts within the reach of mortality, and was far from supposing it possible that any event in this life could make her regret the steps she had taken---“there are instances” returned the lady with some emotion “of the wonderful interposition of Providence in

the moment when short-sighted mortals have had the temerity to despair, and I believe I could produce *one* which would infallibly establish my assertion'---without waiting for a reply the lady instantly disappeared, and almost as instantly returned, leading in a young gentleman with only one arm---he was not to be restrained by formal ceremonies, but flying to the grate he caught hold of my friend's hand which he kissed passionately, and had just articulated the word "*Emily*," when she gave a loud shriek, and sunk lifeless into my arms."

"It required no extraordinary discernment to understand the circumstances of this interview, and it will be unnecessary for me to dwell upon a recital which fancy can faithfully depicture---let it suffice that when Emily recovered, and had composure sufficient to exchange a few words with her long lost lover, the scene was affecting beyond the power of description."

"Thus disturbed from the calm serenity which had weaned her mind from every worldly attachment, no wonder that the tyrant of her bosom struggled to retrieve

retrieve his suspended power, and that under such circumstances *he* triumphed in his turn!"

"Prudence however suggested the necessity of our putting an end to a meeting so repugnant to our established system, and though we had so far managed matters with such discretion that not a sentence had transpired in the convent, yet I dreaded the consequences of a discovery which might every moment be expected. The lovers were therefore persuaded to separate under a mutual engagement of meeting the next morning at the same place."

"And now it was that my poor Emily began to betray the symptoms of regret at having too precipitately (as she expressed it) doubted the goodness of Providence---and now it was that the calm sunshine which religion had shed over her mind began to disappear, and care and inquietude assailed it."

"Though mutual impatience retarded the progress of the lazy hours, the time appointed at last arrived, and the lovers were once more together, separated only

by that barrier which was meant to divide us from the guilty world---but the spirit of enterprize which the young soldier possessed, and which all powerful love animated, urged him to insist on Emily's availing herself of the first opportunity to abandon the convent, and fly with him to England---nor was this so difficult a matter but the artifices of lovers were equal to the accomplishment of it."

"To be brief, in less than a week I lost my beloved friend.---Every preliminary was concerted with such precaution that I was not even suspected of being in any manner privy to her elopement---her lover had a vessel in readiness at Cherbourg, a small sea-port about five leagues from Valognes, from whence they might uninterruptedly depart for England."

"I have dwelt thus particularly on the circumstances of my fair friend's story, because it will be found to relate to some future incidents in my life, which were very materially affected in consequence of her departure."

"Destitute of my amiable companion, the society lost all its attractions, and wore a gloom of melancholy that materially

ally depressed me; and though I had almost reconciled to myself the idea of accepting the veil, and dedicating my life to the holy sisterhood, I felt myself so disturbed in every spot where memory recalled the dear form of my departed Emily, that I determined to leave it, and accordingly wrote to my father for permission to return home.---I mentioned some of the circumstances of my friend's sudden departure, and was so happy as to succeed in my request, though in violent opposition to the wishes of my unkind mother, who was apprehensive of being deprived of her share of public admiration by being seen with a daughter who at the age of thirteen (for I was but little more) appeared almost as much of the woman as herself---and if in this part of my melancholy narrative I presume to say the world pronounced a flattering verdict on my form, it will not be imputed to the vanity, but to the fidelity of my pen."

"Yet let me do my father the justice to declare that the proofs of tenderness which I invariably received from him more than counterbalanced the indifference of my mother---I believe no parent

rent could be more sincerely interested in the happiness of his child, and I trust I felt a grateful sense of the value of his affection."

"Had my history terminated at this period, had my career of life, early as it was, here been closed, I had been happy, and the helpless innocent who now calls me mother, had been spared the participation of my misfortunes."

"But the main springs which actuated my ruin are yet to be unfolded--and with equal sincerity as would be expected before the tribunal of heaven, shall I reveal my every infirmity."

"Young, sprightly, and with an enviable share of beauty, it was not likely that I should long pass unnoticed in the superior circles of fashion--and the earliest propensities of a female mind are too often directed to admiration and to conquest."

"Singled out from a crowd of mortified cotemporaries, I was almost intoxicated with praises--so lavish was every tongue in my favor.--My powers were extensive, my vanity was gratified, and I exulted in the eminent superiority I had acquired

acquired—without giving myself the least thought of a preference, I led all my admirers in filken chains—till ——ah D’Osmont, this silent drop rolls down my widowed cheek, and will not be restrained. —Ill-fated youth! unfortunate husband! what other tribute can the wretched *Adelaide* pay to thy much loved memory.”

“Rash, inconsiderate girl! that in such an illustrious train of devoted suitors couldst not select one reconcileable to the inclinations of an anxious father! then mightst thou securely sheltered from the storms of life, have enjoyed the blessings of conjugal felicity, and the delicious sensations of self-approbation—instead of which, unaccountably misled by the delusive phantom of a romantic imagination, I was weak enough to believe that love always furnished difficulties only to sweeten every subsequent enjoyment.”

“Monsieur D’Osmont was the only son of a respectable private gentleman in a neighbouring province—no part of his family, it is true, had been aggrandized by the specious distinctions of birth or titles,

titles, but they were all sufficiently illustrious in honor and integrity—unfortunately, however, an implacable hatred which subsisted between our two fathers had entirely cut off all intercourse for some years, and baffled every hope of a reconciliation—besides which my own parent ambitiously looked forward to a son-in-law who might present a title to his daughter, and I believe D’Osmont was the only one amongst all my admirers who in this respect was deficient.”

“Yet D’Osmont was all to me, nor could my deluded fancy point out one so exactly correspondent to my ideas of a lover and a husband.”

“Relying on the influence of that paternal affection which I had every reason to be satisfied with, and ill aware of the dangers I was heedlessly exposing myself to, I ventured one day to express myself to my father as particularly pleased with some partial attentions Monsieur D’Osmont had honored me with, and with a significant glance, which too palpably betrayed my meaning, I asked him if the younger D’Osmont was responsible for the errors of his sire—in an instant my father

ther

ther reddened with indignation, and with violent imprecations wished every curse of heaven on my head if I ever dared to mention the subject again — Ah, my God ! it was then I first felt the grasp of the insidious little tyrant, nor till that moment was I aware of the power he had over me ; and yet had I considered the probable consequences of a blind perseverance in my indiscreet attachment, from what I have since felt, I am convinced it might have been overcome.”

“ My lover was on a visit at a neighbouring gentleman’s with whom my father was in common habits of intimacy---but the contrivances which D’Osmont from day to day set on foot to facilitate the means of our privately meeting, were such as afforded us too easy opportunities to cultivate the fatal intercourse.”

“ Thus infatuated with a passion which was every day acquiring strength, only to operate to our undoing, we incautiously enjoyed the present moment, giddily indifferent to the future, and insensible of the evils which were sure to await it.”

“ I was then upwards of fifteen, and my father had invited the young Count

La——rs

La——rs to pass a few weeks at the castle."

"I am free to acknowledge that the person of this gentleman was extremely engaging, and his manners elegant and accomplished, nor do I conceive that a reason could exist for my refusing his hand but a previous surrender (as I thought) of my affections---in a very early stage of his advances I discovered a generosity and disinterestedness of sentiment in him from which I drew some comfortable presages, and one day when he had frankly declared himself, and I conceived it a favorable opportunity for an explanation, I ingenuously related to him my attachment to D'Osmond---and with streaming eyes appealed to his honor, to his humanity.---The Count paused---and I was a little disappointed to find that though his notions of honor were delicate, and his sentiments suitably refined, yet he seemed rather inclined to think there were more of the romantic flights of fancy than reality in my story, and whilst he listened to me with respectful attention it was evident that he was mortified with the unexpected intelligence---at the same
time

time he observed that as the chief motive of his visit to the castle was to promote my happiness, if it had fortunately been in *his* power, and which he owned he had flattered himself would have been the case, as my father, the Baron, had assured him I was perfectly disengaged, yet the regard he owed to his own happiness, independent of mine, would certainly be a security for *me* that no restraint should with *his* consent be put upon my inclinations."

"I was dissatisfied with this cool and ambiguous mode of expression, and retired silent and sullen to my apartment."

"It seemed there were circumstances respecting a contiguity of estates which would have made a match between me and the Count peculiarly convenient, and my father had for some time been earnestly labouring to accomplish it, so that the arrival of the young gentleman at so opportune a crisis was highly flattering to the Baron---judge then of the effect produced by the Count's soon after informing my father with some emotion, that as he had under his immediate auspices aspired to the honor of being his son-in-law, he had just declared himself to that effect

effect to the young lady, but was very much chagrined to find that she had not a heart to bestow on him.

The first emotions resulting from the jealousy of tenacious honor had scarcely subsided when my father sent for me into his library, and the storm (which I had long dreaded,) began to burst upon me—my irritated parent would hardly believe that I had had the temerity to refuse the Count, and choking with choler began to interrogate me with severity, but when he found from my prevarications that there were too sure grounds for the accusation, he tore away from me with increased indignation, and swore I should bitterly repent my disobedience.”

“Destitute of one friend to whom I could with confidence unbosom myself and sue for counsel (for with real regret I must here observe that my favorite friend Emily had forgot me, or some strange fatality had occasioned an interception to the correspondence she promised to enter into with me, and in the hurry and confusion which attended her escape from the convent I had neglected to desire her to leave me an address to England where
I could

I could have wrote to her) and distracted with the most dreadful apprehensions on every side, I saw it impossible to contend with any hope of success, against such formidable opposition----yet the cruelty of my mother at this crisis, who secretly enjoyed my distress and perplexity, and who strove by every unkind representation to inflame my father still more and more against me, determined me to persevere to thwart *her*, let what would be the consequence."

"At length a judiciary tribunal was summoned composed of my father, my mother and the Count, where the trembling Adelaide was to undergo a formal trial, and receive a sentence proportionate to her crime. In my father's countenance anxiety and anger flushed alternately—my mother was all imperiousness and disdain—but the Count with encouraging benignity and conciliatory mildness seemed engaged as my voluntary advocate."—"Your own good sense, Miss D'A—y," said he, "will surely suggest to you the imprudence of persevering in a rash and imprudent attachment—for rash and imprudent that seems to be which threatens

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“ens to involve so many in mischief and
 “confusion—for myself, if I am not so
 “happy as to deserve your esteem, per-
 “mit me to pledge myself in the presence
 “of your worthy father that I will on no
 “account suffer you to be inconvenienced
 “for my sake—but for your own sake, as
 “well as those who are interested in your
 “felicity, let not the mistaken influ-
 “ence of an early prejudice hurry you
 “into errors, fatal to the peace of your
 “family and friends—you are yet very
 “young, and the period of a twelvemonth
 “may mature your sentiments, and ena-
 “ble you to subdue a passion, or rather a
 “predilection which seems at present to
 “have too much dominion over you—
 “with the permission therefore of the Ba-
 “ron, your father, we will suspend the
 “proposed union till the expiration of a
 “year, and in the mean time I shall so-
 “lace myself with the hope of obtaining
 “at that period your chearful and cor-
 “dial suffrages.”

“I felt grateful for this well-timed
 relief which I contemplated for the mo-
 ment as a comfortable respite from fur-
 ther persecution, and was about to reply,
 and

and assure the Count of my ready acquiescence, when my father instantly interfering, addressed the young gentleman with an half-indignant smile, and making a profound obeisance, began to thank him in a style of polite irony for the honor he proposed his family, and at the same time for the convenient opportunity his daughter's absurdities had afforded him of foregoing it---then turning to me he enquired if I too was prepared with a speech, because he said I might be assured that every possible attention should be given to it."

"Summoning up all my resolution I appealed to the justice of my father to determine if this was not the first and only act of mine that could be construed into disobedience---and as such I might reasonably expect it would admit of indulgence---I owned the merits and accomplishments of the Count, and declared that if I had not unfortunately (perhaps indiscreetly) suffered my affections to have been directed to another, I should have considered it an honor to have accepted his hand---but that as I had in this instance committed a fault, I was willing to close
with

with the Count's proposal of a year's suspension, during which I would endeavour to forsake an attachment so repugnant to my father's wishes, and try to do justice to the lover he recommended."

"I ought to blush to declare that this was no other than an act of dissimulation and duplicity entirely calculated to deceive them all, since it was foreign to my intentions at the moment to receive any other for my husband than D'Osmond."

"When I had finished, my father suddenly softened the severity of his aspect, and desiring the Count, to excuse us, he withdrew with me into an inner apartment."

"A scene now ensued which overcame me, and in spite of every opposition, filial affection absolutely triumphed over love."

"Dissolving into a flood of tenderness and tears the Baron fell at my feet, at the feet of his unworthy daughter, and conjured me by the remembrance of every past endearment to consent to an immediate marriage with the Count, protesting that the chief comfort of his declining years depended upon it, and if I would
indulge

indulge him in this respect, I should find every return that my utmost wishes could aspire to---it was not therefore that fame, fortune, and splendor were within my reach, but I should enjoy the supreme satisfaction of having brightened the close of a parent's life---it was enough---the tears of a much loved father were more effectual than a world of menaces---I fell into his embraces with melting tenderness, and unreservedly told him to dispose of me as he pleased."

"He was not slow in communicating the news of his victory to the Count, who received it I dare say with pleasure, and having afterwards had a solemn confirmation from my own lips, they began to talk of preparations for the nuptials."

"On the evening of the next day I saw my unhappy D'Osmont, and that fatal evening undid us all---I frankly declared the situation of affairs within the castle---I urged, I conjured him to separate the friend from the lover, and advise me how to act in so alarming a perplexity---this was a new lesson for which the poor youth was but ill prepared---he looked piteously at me, and pressing my trembling hand to his agitated bosom when he could command

command himself sufficiently to speak, he demanded if the heart of Adelaide was of such little value as not to deserve a struggle at least to possess it."—"Misfortune," said he, "may for a time check my destiny, and I will submit to it as a common calamity, but never, never shall D'Osmont's lips be profaned with the utterance of a sentence foreign to his heart—if I ever consent to relinquish the claim which my Adelaide has given me, may heaven abandon me to the bitterness of ills---were my life to be the instant forfeit of this declaration I am prepared to surrender it, nor think it more than a tribute justly due to a passion which I glory in."

"Ah, my God, had I prudently avoided that meeting, I had escaped the fatal contagion which was then too sure of spreading itself---and possibly time and absence might have yielded a remedy---now the wounds of love were torn open afresh, and every prospect of a cure was completely baffled."

"'Ere I parted with D'Osmont I was imprudent enough to consent to snatch the first opportunity to marry him privately, and in order to accomplish this desperate

desperate point I was necessitated to practice the arts of dissimulation at home as adroitly as possible, and I succeeded so well that I had several interviews with my favoured lover without the least shade of suspicion from my family."

"But whether at last my mother had any doubts of the sincerity of my seeming acquiescence, and fancied from my steady composure that I was meditating mischief, I know not, but I found a pert little page (whom I could never bear) employed as a spy over me, and one evening when I was about to repeat my usual ramble to a particular part of the gardens of the castle (from whence being unattended, I was wont to steal out at a gate I had obtained a private key of) I found myself haunted by the boy, nor could all my contrivances induce him to leave me, and I was at last obliged to return home sorely wounded by the disappointment."

"The next morning whilst I was preparing to attend the family at breakfast, I received a message from my father, signifying that I must consider myself a prisoner in my chamber, from whence I should not be permitted to stir out on any pre-
I tence,

tence whatsoever—that the duplicity I had been mean enough to conduct myself with, in order to effect an elopement, was too shallow not to be seen through, and that my father was determined to be spared any farther trouble or anxiety on my account, by insisting on my nuptials with the Count being celebrated the next evening.”

“To this message I returned no answer, but sat in fullen silence awaiting my fate.”

“Towards the afternoon my father condescended to visit me, and after having severely reproached me for departing from the promise I had with such seeming sincerity given to him, he demanded if I was prepared to marry the Count, or if I meant by any farther frivolous excuses to convince him that *Adelaide D'A*——y was unworthy the race from whence she sprung—guilt, conscious guilt disarmed me, and left no justification in my power—I felt myself abashed and humbled, nor did I hesitate in the hasty impulse of the moment, overpowered with shame and consciousness, to tell him that I was prepared to surrender myself wholly and immediately to his will.”

“My

"My father, interpreting my embarrassment to a contrary cause, now began to believe that he had injured me by his suspicions, and folding me to his heart he called me once more his beloved daughter."

"In short the next day was fixed on for my marriage with the Count, and I had not power to bestow a thought on D'Osmond, to whom my faith had been so recently plighted."

"At the hour appointed I was conducted by my father into a saloon in the castle where the ceremony was performed—yet strange as it may seem, whether a delirium seized me, which rendered me entirely insensible, or how it happened I know not, but I recollected nothing of what passed after I came into the presence of the priest—I saw the awful preparation, and in an instant my every faculty was arrested, and every sense suspended."———

"From this stupor I was however aroused by an incident of a very serious nature."

"I had been conducted to my chamber at night, and was undressed, expecting the arrival of my husband, when I heard

on a sudden a general bustle and confusion in the lower rooms of the castle—the bells were ringing from several quarters, and the servants were running about in violent disorder---I had just rang for one of my own domestics in order to learn the cause, when my father rushed into my chamber, and brought me intelligence that my husband was expiring ---he had burst a blood vessel in a fit of coughing occasioned by a fly getting down his throat in a glass of wine, and his last moments were hastily advancing.”

“Notwithstanding all the circumstances under which I had been deluded into this marriage, I could not help being affected at an event so awful, and having hastily slipped on a *Robe de Chambre*, I went down, just in time, to witness the dissolution of a very amiable young man---he was just able to embrace me, but the powers of language were denied him---his eyes were sunk, and a livid paleness had overspread his countenance, nor was it long before the grim tyrant left him lifeless in my arms.”

“The news of the Count’s marriage, and his death reached my D’Osmont at the
the

the same moment, and he fancied (poor mistaken youth!) that the hand of Providence was held out purposely to rescue me from the fatal sacrifice."

"Our house was immediately arrayed in sables, and every mark of respect shewn to the memory of the unfortunate bridegroom."

"This change in our domestic affairs produced one effect favourable to me---my prompt obedience to my father's will in marrying the Count, had restored me to almost full possession of his confidence, and doubt and mistrust between us being now at an end, I was perfectly free from every kind of restraint, and suffered to do as I pleased."

"The first use I made of my liberty was to enquire after D'Osmont, and I was particularly satisfied when I learnt that he had taken the discreet measure of causing it to be reported that in consequence of my marriage with the Count C--- he was about to return home, and for ever abandon that part of the country, and this was propagated so industriously that it was generally concluded he was gone---my father had no other idea---but D'Osmont,

mont, accompanied by a trusty servant, had assumed the habits and the manners of a peasant, and lived concealed in a solitary farm-house, on the skirt of a wood about half a league from the castle ---this farm belonged to the son of our gardener, whose good offices D'Osmont had the address to secure, so that I soon became acquainted with the place of his retreat, and being perfect mistress of my own pursuits, I used to meet him almost every evening, free from interruption and from suspicion."

"Some law affairs, of importance to my father, now required his presence at the city of Caen, and as my mother intended to accompany him, the Baron very affectionately proposed taking me of the party, but my mother seemed unwilling to urge the matter, and I found no sort of difficulty in declining it."

"How strangely circumstances and events sometimes conspire to lead us into danger!—D'Osmont had now every thing in his favor, and failed not to insist on my performing the promise which had ever animated him, and on which he had ever implicitly depended—in short
within

within a week we were actually married, and fate was more auspicious to his nuptials than to the Count's."

"The chamber where I slept was situated at the extremity of an half-circular gallery—I had given it a preference on account of the prospect it commanded over the garden—there was no private apartment near it excepting a room which was occupied by an old female domestic, whom I had secured into my confidence—The views from the windows were into those parts of the gardens which were seldom visited by the family—A very high wall enclosed them, and they were curiously concealed from the more frequented walks by a clump of thick yew-trees which shaded one of my windows—from this place, aided by the faithful gardener, my husband found means to gain access to my chamber every evening, and for a period of seven weeks our intercourse continued."

"An intercourse, however, which was founded on such a sacrifice of duty and prudence, and so clandestinely supported, could not promise much permanent or substantial happiness—and the little alloy

which reflexion is sure to furnish on occasions of this nature, is more exquisitely painful than any temporary gratifications can counter-balance."

"If the delusions of an ungovernable passion had hitherto chased away every sense of my errors, the fatal period of conviction was hastily approaching—my father's return to the castle aroused every slumbering faculty, and I foresaw, with horror, the moment of recrimination."

"But the death of my mother soon after their arrival gave another colour to the complexion of my affairs—a surfeit caught at an assembly in the city hurried on her dissolution, at the age of thirty-three; and though my father had little reason to mourn her loss, yet I must do him the justice to say he manifested a very decent regret on the occasion."

"When time had a little reconciled him to the event, I had the happiness to find his affection towards me strengthened if not redoubled—alas, my guilty heart but ill merited his increased kindness."

"Although

“Although I had every reason to be satisfied with the repeated proof of tenderness and attention which a fond father seemed to take delight in shewing to his unworthy child, yet they were productive of further embarrassments to me by exciting his desires to see me happily married, and it was not long before another match was on the carpet, which absolutely received my father’s sanction before I had ever heard of, much more beheld my admirer.”

“The gentleman who was thus a candidate for my heart was the *venerable* Marquis of L——ne—his age did not exceed sixty-five, although at a first view of him, there could be no sort of danger in pronouncing him four score at least—when my father proposed this antiquated suitor to me, and hinted that the disparity of years was quite an unimportant object, I treated the subject with every degree of levity, and challenged my father’s good sense to determine if it was possible for me to think him serious—but the glittering idea of a title prevailed over every consideration, and I had my father’s mild,

but at the same time, express commands to consider the Marquis as my destined husband."

"Some symptoms, however, now began to appear which bade fair to discover the fatal secret—and as I dreaded less the effects of an open ingenuous confession in time, than a detection, sudden and unpreparatory, I came to a resolution to seize the first opportunity to disclose my situation to my father—and finding him one afternoon in a temper remarkably complacent and kind, I began to venture a hint, and should presently have proceeded to the sequel but for the interruption of some company who were at the instant announced.—At night therefore when I retired to my chamber I sat down and wrote the following letter, which I left on the table in his study the next morning after breakfast."

" L E T T E R

" TO THE BARON D'A——Y.

" **W**HAT dreadful sensations agitate the bosom of the trembling Adelaide,

laide, whilst she thus ventures into the presence of an offended father! yet her trembling heart must unload itself and sue to be forgiven.—Ah, Sir, does that paternal look, that affectionate aspect bid me hope for compassion, or is it only an illusion of fancy that leads me into error, and will bewilder me in despair.”

“You will not—my honored father will not forget with what prompt obedience I yielded to his will, and consented to a marriage with the Count—after having made that sacrifice—(a sacrifice I must call it, for I loved him not) did my duty demand more—did my obligations, great as they undoubtedly are to such a father, require that I should for ever afterwards be deprived the power of making an election of my own?—I was a virgin-wife, and a virgin-widow—heaven seemed not to approve my marriage with the Count—heaven had witnessed my plighted faith, and approved of him to whom I had betrothed myself—yes, my father, fate had decreed it, and opposition was in vain—it favored and facilitated every measure to accomplish it—it has even favored it to this moment,
and

and now gives me power to tell you that I have been more than three months the wife of Monsieur D'Osmond."

"If this is a fault which past tears of tenderness and affection cannot do away—if you determine to shut the door of parental pity, and will renounce me—I am lost—we are both lost—ah heaven forbid—you know the family of my D'Osmond, and that but for a fatal misunderstanding the *sacred* bond of friendship between you had yet been undisturbed—but if the father has offended, is the son therefore criminal?—how repugnant, my dearest Sir, is this to those liberal principles which you strove to inculcate into my infant mind? how cordially have you admired and applauded refined liberality in others.—Oh be yourself, my father—be the blessed monument of parental goodness!

"You expected me to marry the Marquis—you know it is now impossible—what is to become of your Adelaide—my health suffers—my mind is torn to pieces, and *more than the life of your daughter depends upon her existence.*"

"My

"My husband trembles at the consequences of this discovery---though firm in the consciousness of inviolable integrity, and actuated by every motive of the most exalted honor, he cannot help dreading your displeasure, and suing with his Adelaide on her knees---on his knees---for your protection---for pity towards your unhappy daughter.

OH MY FATHER!"

"THE dreadful suspense that I felt in the intervening hours till dinner, cannot be described---I kept close to my chamber, and fancied every foot that approached towards me was my father's---but I saw him not---at last the dinner bell rang---I got up to walk but my enfeebled limbs gave way, and I sunk into a chair---it rang a second time---all was silent---at length a servant came round the gallery but passed the door of my chamber---I opened it and called to him---"Was my father come in to dinner,"---the servant was uninformed but would enquire---he came back---the Ba-

ron

ron had not been seen since the morning, when he went out with the Marquis, and left no directions whatever."

"But this ambiguous calm soon began to give way to symptoms of a gathering tempest--the gardener, our friend, was discharged---my faithful domestic at the instant brought me a letter from him--it was as follows:--"

"HONORED LADY,

"THE Baron, your father, has dismissed me after a service of fifty-four years in the family, and at this age I am cast off upon the wide world---but God will strengthen and protect *me*---all I fear is for *you*---I am informed some sad doings were in the lane about two hours since---blood has been spilt, and I am terribly afraid of mischief--I hope you know Monsieur D'Osmont is safe.

"Your faithful old servant,

"P. REROUX."

"THE castle bell struck five, and I remained uninterrupted in my apartment

ment--at last a messenger arrived with a mandate from my father for me to attend him instantly in the saloon---the crisis of my fate was now hastening on, and I must support it with becoming fortitude --with tottering limbs I ventured into the presence of my father--the Marquis sat by his side--my father turned away his face, but it was to hide a drop that rolled down his manly cheek --I saw his emotion, and sunk on the floor--the Marquis raised me up, and tenderly conjured me to be composed---my father spoke --“ Adelaide, the means of my forgiveness are within your reach.”---I looked at him, and in an instant was locked within his arms---I kissed his dear cheeks moistened with tears that fell for the disobedience of his only child---“ Oh my father, tell me how to obtain it, and in the face of heaven I swear never more shall Adelaide offend.”---“ Your youth and inexperience,” returned my father, “ will excuse you for having been a dupe to the artifices of a designing villain.”---I trembled and turned aside---“ and there seems,” continued he, “ a fatality in your marriages.

marriages which I own I should not consider any kind of recommendation of you myself---although my friend may be less superstitious---an accident, however, it certainly was that deprived a worthy man of life, but the just resentment of an injured father has sent a scoundrel to his grave---you must resume your sable habiliments, Adelaide, for this morning made you a second time a widow---you should have instructed your adventurous hero that opposition to my arm in a just cause was DEATH---he had not his lesson and he RELL."

"Indignation and rage, the first violent attendants on despair, had now nearly hurried me beyond every bound of reason or discretion---yet I paused for a moment---"and what, Sir, are the conditions you hold out to me to expect your favor upon?"—"those, child," returned my father---"there is the hand of a man of honor ready to snatch you from perdition, and to restore you to my love"—"then, Sir, I will embrace perdition---I will renounce you and your love---satisfied that I ought to despise a parent who, not content with having basely murdered

murdered the husband of his daughter, seeks to aggravate his guilt by insults indecent and unmanly.---If D'Osmont is lost to me, I am lost to you and to the world, nor has life one endearment left ---take then, Sir, your proffered pardon, your unworthy love, and let poor Adelaide sooner become an outcast on the world, friendless and forlorn, than fully the dignity of her soul by another condescension'---I spoke this in a tone so firm and haughty, that my father irritated beyond himself, struck me a blow on the side of my face, and I fell senseless on the ground."

"When I recovered I found myself in my own apartment."

"And now misfortune was pouring all its bitterness upon me at once--the next morning I had another letter from the gardener informing me that my husband and my father met the preceding day about noon in the lane, and though disguised as a peasant, the Baron knew D'Osmont, and fastened on him--the arm of my husband was for a while restrained from assaulting the parent of his
Adelaide,

Adelaide, and whilst he paused with a hope of remonstrating with him, he received the sword of the other in his left breast which penetrated to his heart, and he fell lifeless at the feet of his antagonist."

"Ah my God, I write this melancholy detail with apparent composure, but how shall I ever be able to describe what I felt on the occasion?"

"I was presently seized with a fit of illness which brought on a delirium, and it was wonderful that more serious consequences did not ensue, as the fall had hurt me a good deal---but, it was the will of heaven that I should survive all these calamities."

"Health and a good constitution triumphing over my disorder, in about four weeks I was on the eve of a perfect restoration as to bodily health---were I to endeavour to explain the torments of my mind, or how anxiously I prayed in my intervals of reason to be relieved, I should never find language for the purpose---most fervently and repeatedly did I implore for death--but the error of disobedience.

disobedience was not yet sufficiently punished."

"One evening I was taking a little air in the front garden of the castle, and as the day had been uncommonly sultry, the shelter from the trees afforded a comfortable shade, and suited the state of my melancholy mind---musing on my misfortunes I lengthened my walk until the evening breezes gathered strength, and rustling my garments gave me notice it was time to retire---I had a small lawn to cross to get to the garden gate which was opposite, and was just passing through when a servant came up, and informed me my father desired to speak with me at the east-portico of the castle, from whence there is a vista formed of full-grown poplars which lengthens to the main road---although I wondered at such a message, not having seen or heard any thing of my father since my illness, I yet thought it my duty to comply, and I walked slowly onwards---turning the first corner I saw a chaise and horses, from which two men suddenly jumped, and rushing upon me hurried me
into

into the carriage---I was no otherwise prepared for travelling than having a morning dress and a calash on, notwithstanding which, they ordered the driver to proceed as fast as possible---fatigued and frightened I fainted away, and when my companions had recovered me, they very respectfully intreated me not to give way to any apprehensions of personal danger or insult from *them*, as they had the Baron's authority in writing, which they could produce, for what they were doing."

"We travelled all night with amazing velocity, seldom stopping above a few minutes at the inns, where relays had been provided at the accustomed stages a few hours beforehand."

"At the dawn of day we reached Dieppe, and on alighting from the carriage I was ushered into the chamber of one of the hotels there, and a letter delivered to me from my father, of which the following is a copy ---

LETTER

LETTER.

“THE Baron D’A——y has taken
 “time to consider of the offences
 “of *her* who was once his child—the
 “parent might be expected to influence
 “the judge, and deprecate the severity
 “of justice—but in the present case favor
 “would be weakness, and forbearance
 “absurdity; and the father of Adelaide is
 “under the dire necessity of telling his
 “rash undutiful girl that she has no lon-
 “ger in him a PARENT OR A FRIEND—
 “the most discreet measure she can there-
 “fore take will be to exile herself from a
 “country, as well as a family her mis-
 “conduct has eternally disgraced.”

“Enclosed is an order for 1200
 “Livres, to be paid her by Mons.
 “S——cht at Dieppe, of which it be-
 “hoves her to be careful as it will be the
 “last supply she can ever receive from
 “the same hand.—The Baron has only
 “to observe (and that from motives of
 “humanity) that she need not ever flatter
 “herself with the most distant hope of
 “retrieving his favor or affection, so that
 “all

“all remonstrances and appeals will necessarily fail—nor can any intercourse be expected with him, as he sets off in a day or two on an expedition into Switzerland, where it is most probable he may remain many years.”

“Go, then, ungrateful child—go unworthy Adelaide—and if the infant in thy womb should live and do as thou hast done, then, and only then wilt thou know the anguish of a disappointed parent.”

“D’A——y.”

“TO ADELAIDE——

“I now saw myself a friendless and widowed wanderer in the world, and I recollected with an aching heart the rash declaration I made to my father in our last interview—unfortunate girl! at little more than eighteen years of age, turned adrift into life, banished from her native home, and driven amongst strangers for shelter and protection!”

“The fatigue and chagrin I had undergone exhausted every effort of nature, and sleep for a while drew a veil over my disordered senses.”

“After

“After a repose of about eight hours, which strange as it may seem absolutely refreshed me, I determined to struggle as long as possible against the severity of my destiny, and avail myself of my father’s hint of forsaking my country; and as it occurred to me whilst I lay in bed, that my English friend Emily would be happy to furnish me an asylum if I could fortunately trace her out (and I had some idea of her having told me she was to settle in the West of England) I thought it expedient to repair thither—and having secured my little fortune, and received some trunks containing all my apparel, I applied to the Captain of a packet then at Dieppe, and agreed with him for a passage to England.”

“The next morning I dropt a farewell tear on my native shore, and was conducted to the packet—about 8 o’clock we weighed anchor with a pleasant breeze, the sea tolerably serene, and the day wearing chearful---it was however (as I understood) a side-wind which occasioned a good deal of tacking about, and having never been on the sea before, the violence of the motion was extremely disagree-

disagreeable to me---but what was a very uncomfortable circumstance, and rendered my situation still more distressing, there was no other female passenger on board except an elderly woman, who was too much indisposed herself to be able to render me any assistance.---About two o'clock the sailors talked of a black threatening sky and stormy weather--on ascending to the deck I met a prospect which filled me with horror--a vast interminable expanse of sky and water, and a heavy dismal gloom over the whole peculiarly awful and alarming---nor was it long before a violent rain fell, and hurried the passengers to their cabin---but the most dreadful warning of what was to happen was the Captain's ordering the hatchways to be fastened down, and every person, not wanted above, to be confined below."

"Here was a situation for a young creature to be plunged into, who, but for a perverse opposition to parental authority, might have been lulled in the tranquil bosoms of affluence and ease---I was now on the dangerous element in expectation every moment of being buried

ried in the deep---the world had no charms for me, and perhaps I was the only one on board the vessel to whom death would have been sincerely welcome---I tried to weep, but the solace of tears was denied me---I got upon the bed, and endeavoured to doze, but the noise of the sailors over my head, and the shocks which the ship every moment received, made it impossible---and now the terrors of the sea commenced---the swell was prodigious---the dashing waves pressed on the angry bark which strained with the violence of every attack---at one moment she plunged headlong into the boiling deep, and the next rose up again as if having once more triumphed over her savage enemy---livid flashes of sharp lightning darted across the growling gloom---the thunder rattled over our heads---and in the midst of this warfare of the enraged elements, something gave a sudden crack which sounded as if the ship was splitting into pieces---this we discovered afterwards was the rudder which had been carried away---in a few minutes afterwards went the bowsprit."

"We had now no director, no pilot

K

but

but Providence---the sailors, utterly unable to control the vessel, abandoned her to her fate, and each of them stood in momentary expectation of being swallowed up---the sea ran mountains high---the water burst in at several parts of the cabin, and the shattered remains of what yet preserved us, seemed yielding to destruction."

In about an hour we got information that a ship, supposed to be a smuggling cutter, had a few minutes before gone down, and every soul in her perished---which I suppose was intended as a hint for us below to prepare for immediate dissolution."

"At this dreadful crisis I felt no earthly wish but to see my father once more, and in that state of penitence and sorrow receive his forgiveness—I thought I could have surrendered life easily, had the accomplishment of that been possible—I addressed myself to *my God*, and with fervent and heart-felt contrition, implored forgiveness for the faults of my unguarded youth---and I have reason to believe that at that moment my penitence was acceptable---for a flow of tears came
to

to my relief---my heart seemed lightened, and I waited my fate calmly and resigned."

"The dark dismal night now hurried on---we could steer for no place, being tost about at the mercy of the waves, and certain it is if the ship had not been uncommonly strong she must have foundered--our pumps were constantly at work, as if our only hope sprung from the possibility of preventing the water from gaining upon us in the hold---but amidst all this, and even at the instant when death, with every horror, stared us in the face, I was shocked with the indecency of the sailors---their noise---their oaths---their dreadful imprecations seemed to provoke the vengeance of offended heaven, and shut the door of mercy against us---had health and happiness attached me to life, I should have thought no situation so dreadful as that before us, but it was far otherwise, and I surveyed with becoming fortitude its complicated terrors."

"A melancholy light suspended from the roof of the cabin displayed our desolate condition within---the fire was out,

an universal confusion reigned---the places where the water had forced itself in were so many mementos of our approaching fate---in short, there can be no description equal to the scene which the ill-fated Adelaide had then before her."

"But happy would it have been, had the deep received her, and hushed for ever the sorrows she was doomed to complain of."

"Alas the will of heaven was other. wife!"

"The strength of the vessel at last successfully resisted the formidable force of winds and waves, and by the mercy of Providence to those who wished to live, and whose existence, unlike mine, was valuable to their relatives and themselves, by the dawn of day the tempest had worn itself out, and the danger was no more---this was announced to us by the shouts of the sailors, who declared the Isle of Wight to be in view---and now the hatches were opened, and a melancholy groupe of passengers were invited to ascend the deck---my God! what a spectacle did the ravages of the storm present us to gaze upon!"

"In

"In less than six hours we reached Cowes, and in a state half dead with fatigue, we were conducted to the Vine Inn, and put to bed."

"Sleep, as usual, befriended me, and when I awoke, the sense of the danger I had surmounted was considerably weakened---at the same time I felt in a great measure thankful to Providence for having preserved me from death, and I poured forth my acknowledgments accordingly."

"The next day I accompanied my fellow-passengers to Southampton, without any thing remarkable occurring in our way thither---the passage was pleasant enough, and when arrived at the town we got comfortable accommodations at the Star Inn."

"Behold me now in England, unknown, unfriended and unprotected---ignorant where to direct my course, and uncertain as to what might befall me a solitary wanderer in a foreign land.---Yet I know not how it was, but there was a secret something within me which animated my drooping heart, and encouraged me to look forward to

better days---how this has been verified, my melancholy narative will too fatally exemplify!"

"After two or three days I recovered from the bodily fatigue which had so severely oppressed me, and was in that respect as well as ever."

"I now engaged myself in making every possible enquiry after my favorite Emily, but my description of her was altogether so vague and imperfect (for I knew not her husband's name) that it was very unlikely I should gain any kind of satisfactory intelligence.

"Several times I had it in contemplation to travel to London, but found myself unaccountably checked and discouraged in the attempt---and in a conversation I had with a very good sort of woman whom I accidentally became acquainted with at an inn, I heard so much of Bristol, that I determined for the present to repair thither, and take up my abode in that city."

"To Bristol I went, and after some difficulty I got apartments near the College Green; my pregnancy being far advanced, the people of the house were

at

at first very reluctant in receiving me, until I fabricated a little tale respecting my husband whom I gave them to understand I expected shortly to arrive, and besides shewed them money sufficient to answer any demand that might incur, that in their blind idolatry to that power, their scruples were silenced, and they welcomed me with apparent cordiality."

"In a few weeks I was brought to bed of a boy—and I certainly owe much to a good constitution, and an uncommon elevation of spirits."

"The time however got on apace, and as I paid rather extravagantly for my accommodations, my money necessarily diminished—I cannot say but that I liked the family, and met with a good deal of civil, and rather friendly attention from them."

"Pride, however, forbade my continuing longer with them than I could preserve the appearance I at first set out with, and before it was too late I made up my mind to leave them, and determined to retire into a cheap part of Wales, where I was informed I might

board myself and my little one for one fourth of my present expences."

"One morning I was walking in the College Green, regaling myself and my infant with a little fresh air, when an old figure of a woman with a very tawny complexion crossed me several times in the path, and made as if she wished to speak to me—by her garb and manner I took it for granted that she was appealing to my charity, and I gave her a few halfpence—thanking me courteously and gratefully, she desired I would not be offended if she begged to examine the lines of my hand—I suffered her to do so, and looking me earnestly in the face, she shook her head, and again surveying the inside of my hand, exclaimed, "You are in quest of a lost friend—try, ere it be too late, to find that friend or,"——and she shook her head again—"This is not a likely place," continued she—"You must travel farther"---and she pointed Westward, and departed."

"The ancient stranger's address a good deal chagrined me, but as her advice
corres-

corresponded with my own inclination I resolved to lose no time, but instantly prepare for a journey into Wales—and the people of the house informing me they could recommend me to a family at Swansea, I availed myself of their offer, and took a letter as a sort of humble passport to their hospitality.”

“In about ten days I arrived safely at an inn in Swansea, and after defraying all my travelling expences, I examined my remaining treasure, and found it amounted to nineteen guineas.”

“I now looked in my trunks for the letter I had received from my landlady at Bristol, but, unfortunate creature that I was, I had mislaid it, nor could I meet with it any where—the name of the people it was addressed to, I know no more of, than if I had never heard it.”

“The daughter of the inn-keeper good-naturedly condoled with me in the accident, and told me I should find no sort of difficulty in getting myself comfortably accommodated although I was a stranger, and by her means, I was introduced into a pleasant house near the

coast, where the terms being easy, I took up my abode."

"Thus tost about in a strange world I should certainly have had few moments of tranquillity, but the hope, and the strong belief which I had, of meeting somewhere, either accidentally or otherwise, with my friend Emily, constantly supported me."

"I mentioned the circumstance to my landlady, and she recommended to me to get advertisements inserted in the country newspapers, but I feared it would be considered a trespass on delicacy, and I declined it."

"I have certainly too much reason to believe myself pursued by fate with unrelenting cruelty, or such a calamity could never have befallen me as I am now going to relate--it appears as if the crime of disobedience to a parent can never be expiated."

"My landlady was a very sociable friendly woman, and she had one evening persuaded me to give her my company to a play at Swansea, the company being just arrived in the town--I had from my infancy been fond of theatrical exhibi-

exhibitions, and though I did not like to leave my child, yet as a neighbour's daughter promised to take care of it, I suffered myself to be prevailed upon."

"The entertainments, as is usual in such places, were very long, and it was past eleven at night before the whole was concluded.---It may seem a superstitious notion, but I had all the evening an unaccountable depression on my spirits, a sinking at my heart, as if some new misfortune was about to befall me."

"Our house was half a mile out of town on an hill where the eye has an extensive command over the sea---and scarce had we reached the summit of the hill before we discovered a dreadful blaze before us, exactly at the spot where our dwelling was situated---alas, it proved too true---ere we reached the place where our little mansion stood but a few hours before, we had nothing to behold but a heap of ruins---the first impulse was directed to my little one---I flew to the girl's residence and found it safe and sleeping---but oh my God! except a guinea and some silver which I had put into my pocket, the whole of my money and effects was consumed."

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CONTINUATION
OF THE
HISTORY OF ADELAIDE,

Written in the *Cave* after her *Recovery*.

I HAVE not power to express the delicious sensations of gratitude which my heart glows with, whilst I contemplate the benevolence of Mr. FORTESCUE, and my venerable female preserver.

I have constantly included them in my private offerings to the SUPREME DISPENSER OF ALL GOOD, and next to *him* they are entitled to every tribute of grateful acknowledgment.

My story broke off at the melancholy period when a dreadful visitation of adversity wrested from me almost all I had left of worldly effects---I have had no opportunity of continuing it since, being tost about from place to place in sad and heart-rending uncertainty---the few
lines

lines which I contrived to write in the cover of my manuscript was all I had power to do.

Snatched, miraculously snatched from that fate which I had every reason to expect certainly awaited me, I will forbear to enumerate the various sorts of miseries I endured after the disasters I have mentioned, because, unlike the heroine of a fictitious tale, I met with no friend to relieve my distresses, and my pride, disdaining the meanness of common solicitation, it was not likely that I could support myself for any length of time;—not that I mean to derogate from the generosity which is well known to distinguish your country--possibly had my wants been made known they would have been relieved—from a few private individuals who had discernment enough to understand that I was distressed, I received a little occasional assistance, just and but barely sufficient to support my drooping existence—my infant was naturally my chief care, and I was satisfied when I could find a shelter for *him* and a meal, however scanty, for *his* little wants. The day I wandered into the
wood,

wood, I had walked a great way, fainting and forlorn, and exposed to the cruel insults of the vulgar crew, who, when they surveyed the tattered remnants of my reduced garments, hesitated not to put the most mortifying interpretation on my appearance—the preceding evening I had taken up my lodging in an uncovered cart, a part of which only was sheltered in an out-house—my last halfpenny had purchased a morsel of bread for my child—one moiety of which I gave him then, and the rest in the morning—as to myself I had not tasted food for three days—already had I felt the cold clammy damps of death on my brow, and I saw and was satisfied that my dissolution approached—my last faint efforts were exerted in wrapping up my infant as warmly as I could, meaning to lay it by my side, and sink into the arms of death, but—

———Yes, ye amiable agents of god-like humanity, I *will* live to repay your generous attention—my little one, too, shall live to acknowledge the deed, and to thank you, as he ought, for preserving him and his destitute mother—Come then,

then, my Francis, and with this maternal embrace, let me tell thee that the period of our sufferings seems to be closing, and that a dawn of hope gleams across my bewildered mind.

A. D'OSMONT.

LETTER XXXI.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

KEONCAER-VALE.

IN my last I left our revived fugitive comfortably settled in the lonely dwelling on the moor-side.

A morning or two after, I took occasion to suggest some of the circumstances respecting this adventure to Mrs. Davenport—I was in possession of the manuscript but forbore for the present to bring it forward, rather chusing first to interest her in the fair adventurer's favor, and by gradual progressions develope the main incidents of her story.---Mrs. Davenport is an amiable creature, and there is such

such innate sensibility, such refined liberality in her nature, that I was persuaded I should have no difficulty in securing her friendship for the unfortunate exile, whom I now considered under my protection, and entitled to my every exertion---she, naturally curious to see a person for whom I had expressed myself with uncommon earnestness, proposed accompanying me on horseback to her retirement---and as the introduction of a female acquaintance to her appeared to be the most likely means of furthering our good intentions, and might take off a good deal of that restraint which delicacy imposed, I fixed upon the next morning for the visit---of Mrs. Davenport's penetration I had frequently had the most satisfactory testimony, and I thought if she should feel herself attached to the stranger, as much as circumstances warranted, I might then leave her in a comfortable situation, and be at liberty to engage in my own private pursuits.

We sat off together on a morning airing, and after a ride of about an hour, the solitary habitation was in view---I had not seen Adelaide for two days, and lest it
might

might be construed into an impulse of curiosity amounting to incivility, if I introduced Mrs. Davenport without any previous intimation, I left my fair fellow-traveller at a little distance, and going forwards, arrived at the door, and alighting from my horse, entered the house, and was conducted to Adelaide's apartment--Ever collected and calm, she heard my proposition of bringing a female friend to her with composure---"If the lady," said she, "knows my situation, she will know that I have no pretensions to the affectation of ceremony."

Mrs. Davenport was walking her horse slowly towards the cottage, and from a side window that commanded a view of the road, I observed her approaching---it was not long before I was at the door assisting the lovely woman to alight, nor was it long before I became witness to a scene, the bare recollection of which thrills through my soul, and agitates my whole frame with violent emotions."

"On Mrs. Davenport's first appearance, Adelaide surveying her for a moment with fixed astonishment, started, and turning to me, exclaimed---"Great God

God---Mr. Fortescue!"---Mrs. Davenport I regarded not, until turning about, I saw her sunk into a chair, her handkerchief covering her face, and whilst I gazed upon one and the other in doubt and perplexity, I heard the words "Emily and Adelaide" alternately articulated--to put an end to your surprize, Emily Davenport was no other than the friend Adelaide had sought so long, and had never seen since their separation in the Convent.

Tears of joy suffused their glowing cheeks at this unexpected meeting---Mrs. Davenport earnestly looking at me, rebukingly demanded why I had so long concealed from her the particulars of her friend's story. "I should presently have known," said she, "who it was that Providence had committed to your protection---there could be but one Adelaide---but one friend so dear as that Ade aide is to Emily.

I had some difficulty to get myself taken notice of, so violent and so lasting were the caresses the two ladies exchanged with each other---but when, after having withdrawn for about half an hour, I returned, Mrs. Davenport hastily demanded the
manuscript

manuscript which comprized the memoirs of her beloved friend--it happened to be in my pocket, for tosay the truth, I had entertained some shrewd suspicious from what Mrs. Davenport had occasionally hinted. And from some correspondent circumstances in Adelaide's narrative, that our fair wanderer bore a distinguished part in some of the earlier scenes of Mrs. Davenport's life*, although I longed for a satisfactory *denouement*, and to be a witness to it myself.

You will now suppose me, my friend, loaded with compliments from the no-longer wretched Adelaide--you may conceive what Mrs. Davenport must feel when she heard the partial recital of my behaviour to her friend---Ah, Frederic, the glistening transparencies which distilled from the bright eyes of the charming Emily were indisputable testimonies of her sensibility.

Thus restored to the friend for whom she had chiefly reconciled herself to the idea of forsaking her native country—

* Then why gaze upon them in *doubt* and *perplexity*?—see page 206.

thus

thus sheltered under the wings of that friendship which had ever been an object dear to her heart, for the present we will leave Adelaide, and suppose her cares and inquietudes at an end---the next day she was conducted to the vicarage, and Mr. Davenport, "the young gentleman with one arm" was not long in recognizing, and welcoming the most esteemed associate of his lovely Emily.

And that the gloomy scenes of the amiable wanderer's life may be happily closed, here let the curtain drop---Mrs. Davenport's love and attachment to her friend are infallible securities against any future visitation of misfortunes !

There, Frederic, I have closed my narrative---on Sunday I leave the vale, which during my short residence in it, has teemed with incidents of a very singular nature---I have had a parting interview with the worthy hostess of the cave, and if she would have accepted my services, I would have made the scanty remnant of her days, as happy and as comfortable as she deserves---but she prefers her solitary recess, to which she has been so long familiarized, to the gawdy dwelling of
greatness,

greatness, and contented with the consciousness of living to do good, her heart has no relish for the wild projects of ambition.

You may expect to see me on Wednesday.

Adieu my friend,

Ever invariably yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

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WHEN the editor became possessed of this manuscript, several parts of it were torn and defaced, insomuch that it was not without difficulty the writing could be understood---not that its great age exposed it to the injuries of time, but it had lain some years neglected, and of course liable to those abuses which incautious hands might ignorantly render it.

In conducting a publication of this kind, an editor may undoubtedly claim a discretionary power in arranging the papers, expunging desultory epistles, &c. &c.
in

in order to make it as amusing, and as little tedious as possible to his readers--and though in this collection a considerable number of letters appear to have passed between the parties for some time after the last from Mr. Fortescue, yet as the substance of them can be gleaned, so as to be related in a few pages, the editor has preferred continuing the history for the present in the form of a narrative.

Whilst Mr. Fortescue is on his route towards Switzerland, to cure (as he himself expresses it) the malady of a distempered mind, we will take the liberty of introducing the reader to the family of the Courtneys, at their residence on the Western coast near Charmouth in Dorsetshire--here the amiable Julia Legrand sighed in silence over the well-remembered virtues of the charming Fortescue--and though there is scarcely a doubt but she might have contrived some mode of renewing, or rather continuing her intercourse with her friends in the vale, yet her mind was superior to the little arts necessary to practice for such a purpose; besides her friend, Miss Courtney
would

would on no account suffer the subject to be mentioned without treating it with a ridicule and levity severely mortifying, and highly offensive to the sensibility of her friend.

We further find from some letters, or rather fragments of letters that appear to have passed between Captain Courtney and his sister, that he accompanied Lieutenant Osborne abroad, with a view to find Mr. Dutton, and "avenge the cause of his departed sister"---that they met at Brussels, where Mr. Dutton had recently accepted a commission in the Imperial service, and a challenge having been given, they agreed to retire towards Louvain, where they fought, and Mr. Dutton was wounded in the groin (though not mortally) but Mr. Osborne came off unhurt---his second in the rencounter was his friend Courtney---the other was attended by an Irishman, an officer in the same service.

This was all the revenge Mr. Osborne could take consistent with his character as a gentleman and a soldier---"It is some further satisfaction to me," says Mr. Osborne

borne in a letter to his friend Fortescue*
 “to reflect that the wholesome laws of
 his offended country have enforced this
 wretch into banishment---should he ever
 by stratagems or otherwise find a subter-
 fuge, and venture into England, my arm
 shall still be uplifted to chastise, if not to
 exterminate, such a disgrace to society.”

During Mr. Osborne’s absence on this
 excursion, an aged relation of his died,
 leaving him a considerable fortune on
 condition of his taking the name of
Rochford, and he was agreeably surpriz-
 ed to find on his return to England that
 such a flow of wealth and prosperity
 awaited him---these occurrences altoge-
 ther did not occupy a space more than
 five months, at the expiration of which
 he accepted an invitation from his friend
 Courtney (for the summer began to open)
 to spend a few weeks at his mother’s in
 the West.

Here Mr. Rochford became a captive
 to the transcendant charms of Julia Le-
 grand, and matters were contrived so

This letter had been addressed to the vale, but
 Mr. Fortescue had left the country, and it was of
 course forwarded to his friend Mr. Norman.

successfully,

successfully that in a few weeks they were married---in order to be near the abode of a family whom he had every reason to esteem, Mr. Rochford took a house on the coast near Weymouth, and Julia having been taught to forget (as she herself calls them) the amiable prejudices of a favorite passion, made Mr. Rochford as happy as he wished to be.

Nothing remarkable appearing to occur in the private history of these families, we will take leave of them for the present, and look after Mr. Fortescue---who by this time had arrived in Switzerland.

At this crisis we meet with several letters which passed from Mr. Fortescue to his friend Norman, written on his travels, and containing an amusing, tho' cursory description of the countries thro' which he journeyed---but as there is nothing strikingly novel or interesting in them (at least no more than may be found in the narratives of other travellers) and as they are confined to no particular subject or adventure, we have excluded them from the present collection.

L

About

About the close of the ensuing summer after Mr. Fortescue left the vale, he reached Fribourg in Switzerland—his motives for chusing to dwell at such a season in so cold and cheerless a climate we are unable to explain.

The following is the only letter we can with propriety introduce to our readers, as relating to some distinguished personages in our history---we have no desire prematurely to hurry on the sequel of our work, but we wish to be as brief, and concise as circumstances will admit.

LETTER XXXII.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

FRIBOURG IN SWITZERLAND.—*October 17—*

*

*

*

—And in order to get an opportunity of gathering some little intelligence to diversify the scene, and amuse me a little, I make a point of dining two or three times a week at an hotel here, where a machine or vehicle puts up that
conveys

conveys travellers to and from the neighbouring countries.

I was at dinner there two or three days since, and by chance had seated myself by a venerable looking man, whose converse, and whose manners were irresistibly attractive---he signified that he was a native of France---but that he had of necessity resided in Switzerland some time, I am not sure whether he did not say, some years.

There was a young gentleman of his party who was also a Frenchman, an elegant, accomplished, and well informed man.

From the intimacy, and familiarity which seemed to subsist between them, I concluded the old gentleman was the father of the other.

After dinner, and some of the company had retired, whilst I was taking my wine, I thought I heard the old gentleman utter the name "*D'Osmont*," I was struck with the sound, and eyeing them both attentively (and I dare say rudely) they observed me, and seemed hurt at the inquisitiveness I surveyed them with --- "*D'Osmont*," I repeated involuntarily

to myself---and finding I had committed a fresh trespass, I saw the expediency of offering some apology.

“Excuse me, Sirs, for having given what may be thought an impertinent attention to a sound, which I own excited my curiosity---I heard the name of *D’Osmont*.”

The old gentleman answered.

“That gentleman bears the name of *D’Osmont*---but he is unknown here as well as me---we are both Frenchmen!”

“If that gentleman is known to the family of the *D’A-----y*’s of Normandy, pardon me, Sir, but he is *not* unknown here.”

“Gracious God!” returned the old gentleman, “I am the Baron of that name---this is my son-in-law---I once had a daughter, too---an only child---but you are an Englishman---and to your shores, I rashly consigned a treasure that I would gladly lay down my life to retrieve---possibly, Sir-----”

-----“And the name of that daughter (which you so properly call your treasure) was *Adelaide*.”

By

By this time the rest of the company had retired, and our conversation growing interesting, we ordered a fresh supply of wine, and desired that no one might be admitted to disturb us.

Before any thing further transpired I ordered Maurice to fetch my small port-mantua from Ellercamp's.

He came back with it instantly.

"I have here an undeniable testimony of being known to this unfortunate child of yours---this abjured daughter" ---and I handed the manuscript to the Baron.

"With trembling hands he received it from me, but his eyes were suffused with tears, and he could not distinguish a letter.

I asked permission to read it, and it was returned to me.

But whose agitations were most violent, when I drew towards the conclusion, whether the parent's or the husband's, I know not.

The Baron spoke.

"I am indeed that unnatural father, Sir, whose cruelty your heart must long since have silently execrated---blinded

by ambition, more than I am now by my tears, I sacrificed all to that delusive idol—my crime was enormous, and my punishment has been equal.”

“ But Adelaide mourns a husband slain.”

“ No, Sir,” returned the Baron, “ I have not that addition to my crime to answer for---D’Osmont whom I thought I had killed, lives to be my friend---my son !”

“ ’Tis true,” observed D’Osmont, “ I fell, wounded with the sword of Adelaide’s father—he left me on the spot, but my faithful domestic hurried me away in his arms to a place of security, where my wound being examined and dressed, I lived to be the preserver of my antagonist.”

“ Policy suggested to me the necessity of giving out that I was slain, supposing that when the Baron was satisfied of my death, he would for the present, or until the King’s pleasure could be known (and I had learnt that he was not on very cordial terms with the Court) absent himself from home, which might give me an oppor-

opportunity of once more folding in my embrace my lost—lost Adelaide.”

“’Ere I was perfectly recovered so as to walk, I understood that not only the Baron had left his chateau, but my Adelaide was also missing—nor could all my unremitting enquiries be satisfied with the most distant shadow of intelligence—the current report in the country was that she had destroyed herself.”

“Wretched and desponding, I renounced France, and took my route to this place—and it was not long before I had the good fortune to rescue a gentleman, who was travelling, from a furious set of banditti, who had attacked his caravan on the mountains, and almost overpowered his servants.”

“The gentleman I thus happily delivered is *there*—it *was* the Baron D’A——y—it *is* my father!”

I resumed —— “you understand, Monsieur D’Osmond, that when I left England about ten months since, your Adelaide, after having encountered the severest calamities, was through Providence safely under the protection of her English friend---her dear associate in the

Convent; nor can it possibly be long before you repair thither, and give her the exquisite delight of receiving in one moment a parent and a husband."

"But *you*, Sir," returned the Baron, "how are we to express ourselves to *you* for the interest you have taken in our Adelaide's preservation---will you be content with the blessings of an old man, poured upon you with tears of gratitude---shall the full emotions of the husband's heart be accepted as sincere testimonies of his acknowledgment---but you are an Englishman, and already I see that you are hurt at our supposing the deed you have accomplished, has not carried with it its own reward."

I pressed each of their hands, and a sympathetic tear at that moment stole down my cheek---they saw it, and were silent.

To-morrow the happy father and impatient husband depart for England---they have promised to give me the earliest intelligence of their meeting---I have sent a short billet by them to Adelaide, and Mrs. Davenport.

This

This circumstance has so occupied my time and attention that I have had nothing else in my thoughts---I mark it as a singular interposition of Providence in favor of two worthy lovers; and though the Baron has felt a lingering punishment for his ambition, it was time, when conviction came across his mind, that his sufferings should cease.

What joy will this unlooked for visit to the vicarage diffuse over its happy roof?---how will the amiable Emily, and the venerable vicar hang on the delicious raptures with which they will observe the long-lost husband restore himself to his lovely wife?---nor will the parents feelings be less exquisite!

Adieu---this is one of my long letters, but you had a right to be informed of the adventure.

Ever yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

(After a period of five weeks from the date of the last letter.)

KEONCAER-VALE.

THE silence which Mr. Fortescue thought proper to preserve, during a lingering period of twelve months, impressed us with a painful belief that he had entirely forgotten his humble friends in the vale.

His letter, received a few days since by the hands of the illustrious strangers, and the joyful tidings it brought with it, would have amply recompensed a life of anxiety.

I have a scene to paint to you, Mr. Fortescue, that few pens would be able to do justice to—and mine you know is but the feeble instrument of an unlettered female.

On the evening of Sunday last, my beloved friend Adelaide and I had been rambling into some of those favorite recesses

cesses where heretofore Mr. Fortescue had condescended to accompany us, and were returning to the vicarage when a chaise and four rapidly passed us in the lane—there was a servant on horseback at some little distance before, who occasionally stooped to get information from any foot-passengers that fell in his way—the chaise went forward, and stooped at the vicarage—before we could come up to it the travellers had got out, and were ushered in.

We had a slight glimpse of the company in the carriage as it passed us, and saw two gentlemen apparently strangers to us.

Our curiosity was awakened, but we were far from conjecturing who were our visitors.

On entering the gate of the vicarage, we observed Mr. Percival and the two strangers in close conference in the oak parlour—Adelaide and I had each a cash on, so that it was not easy for our faces to be distinguished by a side-view.

We went up stairs to throw off our cloaks, and were coming down, meaning to take a turn or two in the garden,
when

when Mr. Percival intercepting us in the hall, desired we wou'd retire with him into his study.

I saw something had affected the old gentleman, for his eyes were red, and he seemed to have been weeping.

"My dear Adelaide," said he, taking her hand, and holding it in both his.

"Sir!"

"Tell me, my amiable young friend, are you still the Adelaide your wonderful fortitude has hitherto proved you?"

"Mr. Percival!"

"Ah, my child, Providence has witnessed your virtues in the severe state of probation to which you were doomed, and the moment is reserved to reward you."

"I have borne my misfortunes," said she, "as become one that ought to bow to the power that thought fit to inflict them."

"But you have been taught, Adelaide, that there is an All-controlling Providence who has declared he will never forsake the innocent?"

---"That Power, Sir, seemed to think my indiscretions amounted to crimes,
and

and he has punished me, and I have submitted, accordingly."---

----"If as a proof of his forgiveness and protection, he should by any singular revolution of human affairs restore a father to you---you would have fortitude sufficient for so trying an occasion?"

"To *me*, Sir---restore a father to *me*---here in a foreign country---alas," said she, with a sigh---"I fear he will never more see his discarded Adelaide."

"--- Promise to be composed, my love, and we will see what can be done for you."

"I will promise every thing---I will without a promise declare I will receive him with tears of filial affection that will only flow the faster for having been so long restrained.---"

Mr. Percival retired, leaving the door open, and in a minute returned with the enraptured parent of my charming friend.

"You have not deceived me, Mr. Percival"---and she sprung forwards, and was locked within his arms.

Nor was the delighted parent less agitated.

"I have

"I have found you, my poor Adelaide---only say that you forgive me, and I will make ample restitution for all my offences against nature, and against you."---

"---I---I am the disobedient child---let my father forgive *me*, and the restitution is complete."

They embraced each other with such fond, such melting tenderness that my eyes overflowed, and the furrows on my uncle's cheeks were at the same moment, "the channel of a stream of tears."

"Adelaide, said the old gentleman, there is a friend whom we never can forget---you know Mr. Audley Fortescue?"

"I, and all the world know him to be the best, the most generous of men."

The Baron then recapitulated the circumstances of his meeting with you at an inn in Switzerland, and Adelaide had a fresh testimony of Mr. Fortescue's generous interest in her happiness.

"And now, Adelaide," said her father a little composed, "will you credit my sincerity if in the presence of an injured wife,

wife, and a persecuted daughter, I pour forth a sigh for---D'OSMONT."

Oh, my God," said she, "a sigh for D'Osmond---long since I thought our kindred souls would join together---*he* was my husband, and I loved him---*you* are my father, and the revived affection of a long-lost child would fain obliterate the bitter remembrance---if my father honors his memory, I ought to be content."

"I have a companion with me, Adelaide, who knew and esteemed this D'Osmond."

"Any one, Sir, that knew *my* D'Osmond would esteem him, and to know that he was acquainted with him is sufficient to welcome him to *me*---but is the gentleman all this time alone?"

"Come, Adelaide, and let us together see if on the stranger's countenance, we can discover no remarkable traces of anxiety for his friend?"

She arose, and they departed together.

In a moment I heard a loud shriek, and I flew to the dear girl's assistance.

The husband and the father were supporting her head, for she had fainted,
and

and we were all seriously alarmed lest any fatal consequences should ensue.

She presently opened her eyes, and staring wildly about her, talked in incoherent sentences.

“I dreamt---sure I still dream that I
“had a FATHER and a HUSBAND before
“me---but I thought my dear parent’s
“hands were cleansed from the blood of
“D’Osmont----his tears must have had
“that power---for too sure he killed him.

Finding her intellects impaired, we judged it expedient to remove her upstairs to bed---we sent for Doctor Price, to whom we related the particulars of what had passed, and he prescribed a composing draft, and directed that she should on no account be disturbed.

All night I watched her, and at day-break she awoke calm and composed—I was at her bed-side—“Emily,” said she, “I have had strange dreams—where have I been—my God what have I seen?”

“By slow degrees I ventured to repeat the occurrences of the preceding evening—I assured her that not only her father but her husband was at that moment in the house, and related all the particulars I had been witness to.

She

She heard me with composure.

"Suddenly to find my father and my husband, was too much for a poor weak head like mine to bear—I remember good Mr. Percival's breaking it out to me, that my father was come to see me, and that I saw and embraced him---but my ideas are very confused about D'Osmont."

Happy to find her so well recovered, I longed for the hour of breakfast when I might lead her down stairs, and realize a scene which at present she might not be satisfied was any thing more than an illusion.

Eight o'clock (our breakfast time) came, and I espied Mr. D'Osmont in the garden with Mr. Percival---I ran to him with the welcome tidings, and he received me with transport.

In less than an hour Adelaide was in the arms of her enamoured husband, and had received the blessings of his affectionate fire.

So much had Adelaide to ask, and so much had D'Osmont to answer, that we could gain no sort of regular or reasonable intelligence.

After breakfast they retired together,
and

and D'Osmont related all the circumstances of his recovery, his providentially saving the Baron's life on the mountains--and his meeting with you---but you have heard all this, Mr. Fortescue, from D'Osmont himself.

The most painful part of my narrative is now to come---to-morrow I lose my Adelaide---the Baron, D'Osmont, and his lovely bride (indeed, Mr. Fortescue, she is a charming creature) are going up to London, where they mean to reside for the remainder of the winter---if I had not been liable to indisposition I should have been of the party---my husband has promised that I should follow them in a few weeks.

The noble Baron has distinguished himself here with singular munificence---all the villages and country-people for miles round about the valley have participated his abundant bounty, insomuch that it is supposed he must have at command the wealth of either Indies.

Nor has the worthy, generous solitudinarian (Judy Bell) been forgotten---if a fourth part of his fortune had been required, I am sure the Baron would have
gladly

gladly surrendered it for the benevolence she exercised towards his child---but all he could prevail upon her to accept was an annuity of eighty pounds a year, to be paid her quarterly by Mr. Percival, not only for her life, but the power of bequeathing it after her decease to whom, and to whatever purpose she pleases.

They promise early in the spring to pay the valley another visit, and if a house can be found in this part of the country suitable to their rank, and likely to afford them proper accommodations, they mean to make it their summer abode.

Possibly when Mr. Fortescue is tired of rambling, he may once more be induced to taste the sweets of rural tranquillity amidst the humble shades of this seclusion---it was once honored with his partiality, and to the attractions of his friendship he will not, I think, be insensible.

Adieu---Sir---my uncle and my husband seriously esteem you.

Your obedient and obliged,

EMILY DAVENPORT.

A D E-

ADELAIDE WRITES.

YES, most amiable, most generous of men, I am indeed, through your means restored to the full possession of happiness supreme---and if there is one partial prayer that heaven would deign to listen to, for your everlasting prosperity, Adelaide on her knees would fervently offer it.

Ah, Sir, forsake that gloomy soil---those comfortless regions, but ill calculated for a heart like yours, and come to happy England---come and make one of our delighted family---made so by *you*.

My husband loves you for his Adelaide's sake---my father loves you for the sake of gratitude, because he has no other way to shew the sense he has of your goodness.

Adieu---amiable friend---may every lasting happiness be yours.

ADELAIDE D'OSMONT.

Mr.

Mr. D'O S M O N T W R I T E S.

WHILST there is room permit me, Sir, to confirm what my adored Adelaide has advanced.

From *me*, Mr. Fortescue, particularly accept the most cordial acknowledgments of gratitude—believe me, they issue from a warm heart, that has no pride greater than in attaching itself to such consummate worth as Mr. Fortescue's.

Farewell, Sir—best of Friends farewell!

D'OSMONT.

HAVING left our Norman friends happy, we have no farther business at present in the vale—and possibly these letters had never seen the light, had the history of all the parties terminated here.

—But we have a sad sequel to unfold---which will fatally exemplify the frailties of nature, and shew, (unexpectedly shew) who were marked out for the melancholy victims.

It

It does not appear from any letters before us, what became of Mr. Fortescue after he departed from Switzerland, which he appears to have left the end of February in the following year---there is a fragment of a letter which seems dated from Paris, merely giving directions to his friend Norman about some law business respecting a contested estate in Suffex.

Whether travel had the wished-for effect upon his mind or not, we are unable to tell; but about the middle of the ensuing summer we find a note dated from a hotel in Dover-street, London, intimating that he is just setting out for Weymouth---from which place he addresses the following letters to his friend.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

WEYMOUTH.—*July.*

NOW, pity me, Frederic, for I am indeed the most miserable of men.

If the wounds of love were closed for a while (healed they never could be) they have

have now burst open afresh, and at this moment I am suffering with torments inexpressible.

On my arrival here I met with the *Dawson* family, who, upon your account (I suppose) received me as civilly as they could.

Their tall, prim, meagre daughter tittered when I saluted her, and greedily caught at every thing that sounded like a compliment without giving herself time to suspect, much less to detect the counterfeit.

They would have provided me an apartment in the house they were in, but it was intolerably crowded, and I preferred the hotel, not only because it commands a view of the sea which I am partial to, but the better sort of company resorts there, and the accommodations are comfortable.

I was obliged to promise to breakfast with the ladies the next morning---at the hour appointed I went.

The old man had secured his morning meal, and like a faithful accomptant was set off towards the sea-coast to calculate, I suppose, the expences of this excursion at per day.

Mr.

Mrs. Dawson, and Miss were arrayed in loose morning dresses with enormous puffed sleeves, seven years at least behind the present mode.

I might endeavour to entertain them with common-place chat, but it was merely a sacrifice of time, and would have been as great a sacrifice of rational conversation.

I knew very well that I was a stranger in the place, and for the sake of a little introduction, I thought I might make shift until I could better myself.

We finished our dejeuner, and I agreed to attend them to the rooms in the evening.

Behold me then ushering in the stately Miss Dorothy Dawson, closely followed by the demure father, and the fantastic mother.

To our seats we went—I played with my hat—stole a half glance about the room—said a few unmeaning things which I defy any one to understand—and in a word—was ridiculously absent.

The dances began, and I was simpleton enough to lead Miss Dawson down the set.

I paid

I paid but little attention either to the male or female part of the company, for I was displeased and mortified.

I had reached the bottom within a couple or two when turning a lady round I thought I heard a faint exclamation---I looked up, and at the instant found I had just parted with the hand of---my long lost JULIA!

She was engaged to a genteel young man, an officer.

This was a dead-stroke for Miss Dawson's pride and vanity---I pleaded a sudden head-ach, and begged to sit down.

But before I had been seated a minute, I arose, and with trembling limbs went up and addressed the lovely girl.

A blush suffused her charming countenance when I spoke---but she seemed, as usual, all complacency and condescension.

Her enquiries were pointed, and implied something reproachful---but oh Norman, when I was about to excuse myself, and called her Miss Legrand---she interrupted me---“her name was no longer Legrand,” and she held out her

M

finger

finger where the fatal memento presented itself—"my name, Mr. Fortescue, is Rochford—a few years brings about strange events—I would with pleasure introduce you to Mr. Rochford, but he left me yesterday morning, and is gone up to town on some concerns particularly interesting, and at present I am under the protection of this gentleman's mother and sisters."

And she bowed to the gentleman with whom she had been dancing.

"Excuse me, Captain Bertie, but this is an old friend of mine whom I have not seen for some years—dancing you know, is not a favorite amusement of mine, and you will have the goodness to dispense with me."

The gentleman politely resigned his claim, and together with me led her to a seat.

I touched her hand—oh my God—what agitation overpowered me—she looked at me—she sighed—our eyes met—she cast down her's—and again she sighed.—

When the dances were finished we were joined by Captain Bertie and his sister—
and

and from the significant glances which the latter cast at me I was inclined to think that my name had been mentioned to her before.

The rooms beginning to clear, I was suffered to lead Mrs. Rochford to the coach, followed by Captain Bertie and his sister.

I received a pressing invitation to breakfast in the morning, and I handed my lovely charge into the carriage.

Her hand was uncovered—I had ventured a slight pressure as I walked with her---she made a pause in her steps---I repeated the pressure as she ascended the carriage---she looked at me, and I felt my hand confined in her's.

“Adieu, Mr. Fortescue”---said she---
“we expect you to-morrow.”

And our hands were disengaged.

I bowed, and assured her I would be punctual.

Miss Bertie and her brother took a polite leave of me, and the coach drove away.

I don't know that I ever felt my mind more racked with doubt, anxiety and inquietude.

"The lovely girl," said I, "is not happy---who can this Rochford be?"---and I enquired of Mr. Stacy if he knew a gentleman of that name.

There was a gentleman so called who had resided a few months only in Dorsetshire---his house was about three miles from Weymouth---it was sadly out of repair when he took it, and at present the workmen were in it.

"And who was Captain Bertie?"

"The son of a most respectable lady who resided in the summer season at Weymouth---a character that did honor to human nature."

I went to bed, but slept not---sometimes a momentary slumber overtook me, but I started out of it, and in that restless state passed the night.

I arose at seven, but looked sadly languid and unrefreshed.

It was necessary however that I should put on the best appearance I could for my morning visit.

h, Frederic, how unlike the visit of the preceding morning.

The hour appointed was nine---and it had struck before I left the hotel.

I found

I found the ladies at the breakfast table but the gentlemen had not yet joined the party.

Mrs. Bertie looked all that had been said of her—if the form of a venerable angel can be conceived (and I don't know why it should not) Mrs. Bertie answered the description.

I took my seat by the side of Julia—she looked—my God—what elegance and grace did not this female trio exhibit.

Miss Bertie is very pretty, but seems amiably conscious of her inferiority before the transcendant Julia.

We finished breakfast, and my invitation was continued to dine—the hour was three, but the ladies would be ready by two to take a ramble on the sands before dinner.

At two I attended them, and——

Miss Bertie had a friend called upon her with whom she must stay, but Mrs. Rochford would put herself under my protection.

And we walked together towards the sands.

“I have had no time, Mr. Fortescue, to make any particular enquiries after

our friends in the vale—is it long since you were there?”

This interrogation necessarily led to an explanation, and I briefly related what had passed, reserving the story of Adelaide, which I had not then time to enter upon—I told her of my having been abroad—I even hinted the occasion of my travelling—and concluded with saying, “I little thought Mrs. Rochford that you would so soon have found a man deserving the title of husband for Julia Legrand.”

“When I married, Mr. Fortescue,” said she, “I cannot say that I was led away by those extravagant notions of love and happiness that once I too fondly indulged—but it was a sober match, and may perhaps produce as much real felicity as those attachments which are founded on romantic principles.”

“And am I so happy as to hear that Mrs. Rochford is satisfied with her choice?”

She paused—

“I might have had a choice more reconcileable to my mind, but it does not therefore follow that I should have been
more

more happy—Mr. Rochford is a most amiable character, and my affection for him is every day increasing.”

And I saw, Norman, that this Rochford has tamely married a woman whose love for him was to grow, and be cultivated afterwards—what an insipid idea must such a man have of conjugal felicity?

Julia has made her election, thought I, and like many others in the same predicament, she will at least *seem* satisfied with herself.

We had only an hour appropriated for walking, and the church clock striking three, it served as a summons to dinner.

I am confident that Mrs. Rochford was hurt at my seeming to distrust her being happy—for a gloom immediately overspread her countenance, and continued all the day, though I made every possible attempt to remove it.

We had a flimsy addition to our party at dinner—I was again seated by the side of Julia, between her and Miss Bertie—the latter lady had a fund of pleasing vivacity which is happily contrasted by the sweet languor, and plaintive com-

placency of the other—the rest of the company (after excepting Mrs. Bertie, and her son the Captain) are not worth noticing.

But how shall I describe the fascinating glances which the lovely Julia from time to time cast on your agitated friend?—they brought back to my eager fancy those delicious hours---when it fed on the delusions of hope, and was delighted with fond anticipations----Ah, Frederic, I lost myself in retracing scenes that never more can return!

And I find my spirits sinking, and my heart solely deprest since this fatal interview—fool that I was to think that such an angel-form as Julia Legrand could be beheld any where without admiration, without devotion.

Must I leave her, wretched as I am---must I again renounce my native country and again become self-exiled from the world?---heretofore I have had fortitude, but I feel myself now unequal to it---I am rivetted to the spot which contains Julia, and though I know I am vainly feeding a hopeless passion, yet I would rather die with the belief that she once loved me,
and

and that she yet thinks with regret on my sufferings for her, than with dangerous violence tear myself away, and give her cause to suspect that the soul of Fortescue has renounced that sensibility which first endeared him to her gentle affections.

Adieu---my friend---I told you long since I was not born to be happy, and the prediction every day becomes more and more verified.

Sincerely yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER XXXV.

TO AUDLEY FORTESCUE, ESQ.

LONDON. — *Tuesday evening.*

FLY, my best friend, my Fortescue, fly from the dangerous snare which a fatal passion is preparing for you—I conjure you to hasten away 'ere the mischiefs which I foresee, involve yourself, and your friends in misery and wretchedness—Ah, my God, Fortescue, what

M 5 dreadful

dreadful infatuation can possibly prevail on you to stay an hour after this warning from your

F. NORMAN.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

WEYMOUTH.

I MUST fly—but whither I know not—I must bid an eternal adieu to peace of mind, and tranquility—I AM A VILLAIN----a friendless and abandoned outcast--for after you have heard the story of my guilt *you* will renounce me and leave me to my miseries.

And oh, Frederic, whilst the melting eye of friendship weeps for the errors of an unhappy man, let a tear fall for the deluded partner of his crimes, for the lovely unfortunate that once was Julia Legrand.

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

WEYMOUTH.

WHEN, fascinated with what I believed to be love, I suffered myself to continue my intercourse with the most charming of women, I thought Audley Fortescue sufficient master of his passions to subdue any dangerous propensity--alas, I knew not that it were possible for circumstances and events to combine so effectually together to favor a pursuit marked with such complicated criminality.

But I was destined to be miserable, and to furnish a melancholy instance to the thoughtless world of the embittered moments which necessarily follow the indiscriminate gratification of tyrannic passions.

Day after day, and from morning to night I visited, and was welcomed to the house where dwelt the too powerful, because too lovely enchantress---I saw, wretch that I was, I soon saw to what dangerous

dangerous extremities I was liable to be hurried---for already I had unguarded moments, which returning reflexion made me shudder to remember.

The evening I dispatched my last short letter had witnessed a scene that stamps me the most abandoned of mankind.

Miss Bertie had been all day indisposed, and had retired early to rest---the old lady entertained us at supper, and, as was her custom, withdrew;---soon after Julia and your friend were together.

We were seated on a sofa---the clock struck eleven---the room opened with folding doors into the garden---the moon shone delightfully, and a brighter, more heavenly evening I never saw---I proposed a walk round the grass-plot----Julia slipped on her cloak and accompanied me---I took hold of her hand----the touch thrilled through every sense, and fanned every dormant fire---I held it fast locked in mine as we walked---we went in again---again we sat down on the sofa-----
 “this reminds me, Mrs. Rochford, of our
 “happy rambles in the dear valley----
 “then no cold restraint damped the ar-
 “dour of young love---no trespass could
 “be

“be committed on the tenacious privileges of conjugal delicacy”---She did not seem to understand the latter part of this sentence---I continued, “what would the happy Rochford say if he saw poor Fortescue here, only come to sigh in painful remembrance of pleasures past, and lost to every future hope”---“Mr. Rochford will be your friend, Mr. Fortescue---and you will be a friend to his family”---“But my greedy heart is not satisfied with so cold a claim as friendship for *you*”---and I pressed her hand to my lips---she trembled---I threw my arm around her waist---her lovely head, half-reclined, rested on my shoulder---the attitude was inviting, and I snatched a kiss---“fye, Fortescue---I must leave you”---and she made a faint effort to rise---I detained her---all was silent---I trespassed as if by accident on her tucker---she gently chid me, not with words, but feebly arrested my presuming hand---I saw the struggle of virtue---it might have prevailed had I desisted, but her eye betrayed a melting languor which encouraged me---I kissed her more ardently than before---she seemed insensible*-----

* This part of Fortescue's letter seems with descriptions too loose to be introduced here.

again I ventured on her tucker---she knew it not----one minute more---the clock struck twelve---all was silent---I was not yet certain of my conquest---another minute flew---and Julia was lost.

* * * *

Such scenes as these, Frederic, have occurred before---two lovers roused by returning reason from the fond delirium of guilty passion, have exhibited all the symptoms of horror and distraction---but surely a Julia never fell before--God of heaven, the bare remembrance chills my blood, and most fervently do I wish for instant annihilation!

“ Oh, Fortescue!”

These were the dear woman's first articulations—then turning away her face, and lifting up her streaming eyes and folding hands she continued—

“ Oh, Rochford!”

To sooth her with any arguments tending to palliate our crime would have been an insult to her reason.

“ We loved each other long, Julia—from the earliest period of our ripening intimacy we felt a mutual presentiment
of

of affection—Custom which you despise, has forbade this criminal indulgence—honor has forbade it—but the man whom you have blest—your devoted Fortescue is only to blame—and the dark mantle of this guilty night can never be drawn aside to expose the mischiefs it has teemed with.”

This was the most unfortunate attempt I could have made to pacify a mind like Julia Rochford’s.

She looked reproachfully at me.

“ And does Mr. Fortescue mean this as a cordial likely to restore that peace which I know I have lost for ever—? Fortescue I own I loved you—but I bore your neglect of me with the becoming dignity of conscious virtue—I married in order to forget you—where now is that supporting consciousness—think of *your* frail CAROLINE, Mr. Fortescue---and that there is now another Dutton exposed to the vengeance of an injured husband--when I read” continued she, “ that unhappy woman’s melancholy narrative, I pitied her--from my soul I sympathized in all her sorrows --and when in the anguish of her mind
she

she owns herself ashamed to return and face her injured lord, I felt as I now feel ---for oh, Fortescue, never more shall the injured Rochford "*receive within his embraces HER that has dishonored and disgraced him.**"

The night was now far advanced, and seeing the impracticability of calming her mind (so violent and tumultuous was every emotion) I proposed it expedient for the purpose of discretion to part for the evening, and she herself conducted me to the door, but I feared I saw something in her eyes (a wild and vacant stare) that amounted to a symptom of frenzy--- I pressed her hand and we separated.

The next morning (yesterday) about eleven I called (as was my custom) to enquire after the family---Mrs. Bertie was alone, and received me with her usual cordiality---good unsuspecting woman---she little thought what mischief had been perpetrated---she sent up for Mrs. Rochford---a message was returned that Mrs. Rochford was indisposed, and I saw her not the whole day.

* Mrs. Fortescue's words.

I have been writing since eight o'clock this morning---my breakfast is before me, but I can take nothing---I shall direct my steps presently to Mrs. Bertie's, and I must see *my* Julia---the post will go out before I can add any thing more.

Oh, Frederic, what have I done---I may flatter myself, that because this Rochford, whom I have so ungenerously abused, is not my friend, and as we are unknown to each other, my fault is not so enormous as Dutton's---'tis so far true, but the consolation I can derive from such a reflexion is like a reprieve to a criminal for one week, at the end of which he is sure to suffer!

Adieu---I am indeed the wretched

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

TO FREDERIC NORMAN, ESQ.

I AM this instant setting off from Weymouth---the place of my destination is at present a secret, but you shall hear from me the instant I am settled--I have

no

282 AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

no time to add more, unless to tell you
that I have a partner in my expedition.

Ever yours,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

Weymouth, Friday.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

To Captain FRANCIS BERTIE, at Wey-
mouth.

HOLYHEAD,---*Tuesday afternoon.*

DEAR BERTIE,

I HAVE traced the fugitives to this place, and it is not more than three hours since they sailed in a packet hired for the purpose, for Dublin---unfortunately there is not another left for me to continue my pursuit, and I must necessarily wait until the arrival of the mail from the opposite shore which is every hour expected.

Gracious heaven, that it should ever be possible for such a character as Fortescue to perpetrate so black a deed---and towards a man who once thought his
friend-

friendship an honor, and who was proud in acknowledging his exalted liberality? ah, my friend, I would fain persuade myself they are not criminal, and that some mystery is wrapt up in this transaction which may yet be explained, and I may be happy.

If virtue dwells not in the angel-form of Julia Rochford, it may be concluded that she has taken her flight from earth, and bid eternal adieu to the world.

Farewell---Bertie---I am sick at heart, but ever yours,

R. ROCHFORD.

LETTER XL.

TO THE SAME.

DUBLIN.---*August.*

DEAR BERTIE.

WE have met—their guilt was established by confession, and when you have heard the fatal narrative, you will judge of the situation, and the feelings of your friend.

The adverse elements kept the expected packet out all night at sea, and it was

was near ten the next morning before I had an opportunity of embarking—the wind being pretty fair for Dublin, we reached the bay in something less than nine hours.

Dublin, unlike London, can afford but few asylums that are not liable to be discovered---and the arrival of an English family is presently known; consequently I had no great difficulty, after describing the parties, to trace them to their retreat---they had taken up their abode at the _____ hotel in _____ street.

I know not how it was but I preserved a wonderful calmness on this occasion---the hope I vainly (and indeed extravagantly indulged of Julia's innocence, checked my turbulent passions that might otherwise have hurried me into extremities---I kept my uniform great coat on, and with my sword underneath it, I arrived at the hotel.

The waiter on my enquiry informed me that such a lady and gentleman came there the day before, and if I would send up my name he would announce it---I directed him to say that an English gentleman,

tleman, a friend of Mr. Fortescue's, wished to speak with him, and the waiter went up stairs—judging, however, that all kind of ceremony might on this occasion be dispensed with, I followed him closely, and was in the room almost as soon as himself.

There sat Julia in a black riding dress with Fortescue at tea.

The sight petrified me with astonishment and horror---I felt my head giddy, and with one hand resting on a chair, whilst my sword supported the other, I looked at the guilty pair, but had the world been given me I could not have uttered a sentence.

Julia gave a shriek, and fell backwards.

Mr. Fortescue arose and addressed me.
“ Mr. Osborne !”

“ My name, Sir, is Rochford.”

Fortescue started back, and staggering to a chair threw himself on it, beating his forehead with his hand, and exclaiming, “ Then is the measure of my misery full !”

I flew to the fainting sufferer, and for the moment, forgetting her guilt, I raised

raised her up in my arms, and carried her, senseless, to a sofa.

Presently she revived--

I spoke.

"Mr. Fortescue had a wife, a beloved wife, whose infidelity cost him dear--if he had been disposed to retaliate on the world for his own private sufferings, he should have spared his friend--he should have spared the brother of his Caroline."

"By the God of heaven!" said Fortescue, "great as my crime is, I knew not till this fatal moment that Mrs. Rochford was the wife of my friend."

Poor Julia's shattered senses could scarcely afford her sufficient reason to understand this, and she stared with wild astonishment about her.

"Is my husband--*him* I mean (said she, pointing impatiently to me) is he, I ask, a friend of Fortescue's?"

"His sister," returned Fortescue, "was my wife--the unfortunate Caroline whose fate I deplored at so early a period of our acquaintance--gracious God---how came your husband's name to be Rochford?"

"Enough,"

"Enough," said she, "the mischief is complete, and our ruin is inevitable--a few hours will end my guilt, and my existence"--she turned to her husband--"pity me, Rochford, whilst I have the power to ask it--this moment has disclosed a secret, which had I known sooner might have saved us--but no matter--I loved Fortescue--years since I loved him--I thought I had triumphed over the weakness of my youth--virtue and duty persuaded me so--but I was deceived--I seek no extenuation, Rochford--I am guilty--be merciful to me, God!--will one of you, gentlemen, be kind enough to order a female servant to take care of me? I am very ill."

I rang the bell and two women servants were directed to convey her into a chamber.

They led her away.

Fortescue and I were together.

He came up to me.

"Now, Osborne, Mr. Rochford, I mean, who is it that sues to be forgiven? who is it that now pleads for an unfortunate wife? I wonder that I have power to speak to you--but it will hereafter be accounted

counted for---do me the justice to say that your heart acquits me of any knowledge that the name of *Rochford* was applied to the person of *Osborne*---the fatal mistake has undone us all---your sword sleeps by your side, because you are too brave a character to stain it with my blood, whilst I am naked and disarmed, although I should ask it as the greatest mercy you could possibly render me---and would bare my bosom to the stroke---neither will I suffer you at present to invite me to a contest in the field---I have already enough to answer for, without any additional crime which the risque of such a combat might load me with---by to-morrow morning, you shall find I have devised some means of satisfying you---I pledge myself that I will on no account stir out of the hotel till you have seen me---you know I am incapable of forfeiting an engagement of that nature."

I could not witness the anguish of poor Fortescue's soul whilst he spoke without remembering the friend he had been to me---the tear started on my cheek, and I was silent.

"Well,

“Well, Mr. Rochford,” continued he, “do you suffer me to withdraw upon these conditions?”

“Fatal indeed, Mr. Fortescue, has been the source of that error and misconduct which involves two friends, like us, in such dreadful calamities---but admitting the first mistake as *Osborne*, I can draw no consolation whilst I feel myself injured as *Rochford*---you may observe that I am not unmoved myself, Mr. Fortescue, upon your account---I am sure your anguish is equal to what I would wish my greatest enemy to suffer---at present we will seek no farther explanation on either side---I shall expect an interview with you in the morning”---and I retired.

I sent to Julia's chamber, and learnt she was in a high fever and delirious---in an hour afterwards I sent again, and understood she was worse, and attended by a physician---Mr. Fortescue had given directions in this respect, in order to prevent the affair becoming a public talk---and I had previously told him that I had no objection for the present to have matters concealed.

And in this dreadful state, after taking

N

a glass

a glass of warm wine I retired to my chamber.

Mine was indeed a sleepless bed, for I felt a thousand agonizing sensations, the least of which was sufficient to militate against rest.

About three in the morning I was aroused by the report of a pistol, and in an instant the house was alarmed, and in an uproar---I had a fatal foreboding of mischief---but was in doubt until a servant knocked at the door of my chamber, and informed me that the gentleman I had been in company with the night before had---SHOT himself.

I hurried on my cloaths, and repaired to Fortescue's apartment---there lay his lifeless remains stretched across the bed---the fatal instrument was on the floor, supposed to have dropt from his hand---another loaded pistol lay on the table.

I took hold of the unhappy man's cold hand, and a tear fell to his memory---I could not help it, Bertie, for I once had reason to love him.

I was fearful that some circumstances would get wind in consequence of this melancholy disaster---and I had some difficulty to evade replying to the numerous enquiries

enquiries which busy curiosity dictated.

It was my particular request that it should be concealed, if possible, from the lady, and the servants promised to comply with it.

I returned to my chamber, and in a state of the most trying anxiety, I passed the intervening hours till the clock struck seven—when I hastened down stairs, and dispatched a servant to enquire after Mrs. Rochford—the message I received was of such a doubtful unintelligible nature that I sent again, and desired to be admitted to see her.

The servant came back, and informed me that no one was in the chamber, but the physician, and *he* did not seem to object to my visit.

On entering the apartment the doctor significantly shook his head--“we have a desperate case here, Sir, but I presume you have some private business to settle, and I shall leave you”---and he offered to withdraw, which I did not oppose.

I drew aside the curtains, and spoke---but she knew me not--after having gazed upon me some seconds she fell into a strange incoherent rambling, and when her articulation ceased, her lips continued in motion---I spoke again--“Julia, you know me not”---she listened to the sound, “they have told me so”---said she---“they have brought me a mirror

where I saw my bleeding husband, and ANOTHER falling---killed by each others hands---ah Fortescue, I told you how it would be---it would have been well done, had you placed me between your swords, and then the guilty Julia would have suffered!"

Unable to bear a scene so affecting I ordered the physician to be called in---he came, but he was not the kind of man I wished for---there was a troublesome egotism, an unmeaning garrulity about him that but ill suited so solemn an occasion, and I found it impossible to make way to his feelings---all I could gather from him was that if he could not save her, he defied all the world to do it, and he was fearful that it was past *his* skill."

I put five guineas into his hand, and earnestly recommended her to his attention and care---this somewhat softened the moroseness of his manners, and he promised not to leave her till he could do it with safety.

The females now came in, and having made use of a proportionate share of the same irresistible power to them, in order to secure *their* good offices towards the unhappy patient, I withdrew to a breakfast parlour.

The tea things were prepared, and I poured out a cup---I applied it to my lips, but they were so parched and dry
that

that I could not swallow it---I set it down, and at the instant a servant entered---he had in his hands a paper---“this letter, Sir, was found on Mr. Fortescue’s dressing-table---it is addressed to Reginald Rochford, Esq. and I presume you are the gentleman”---I took it and made a motion for him to withdraw---it was sealed with black wax, which I broke and read as follows.

L E T T E R.

TO REGINALD ROCHFORD, ESQ.

I TOLD you that I should devise some means of satisfying you by this morning---will my life be ample expiation? take it, Rochford, for with such a load of dishonor and misery, it is not worth preserving. ———

———Then it is not worth resigning—Yes, Rochford, I know what pursuits tyrant custom points to---and I surrender my life, that it may be the means of saving yours.

Live, excellent young man---live---and from the melancholy end of *him* that that was *once* your friend, learn to suppress the earliest advances of dangerous passions.

What is to become of Julia? she must not know my fate, Rochford---you may tell

tell her that I am gone abroad, *never more to return.*

I have written to my friend Norman*, and with my own hands committed it to the post---I have told him all that has happened---and he has my directions about some worldly matters--your name is mentioned to him, and you will forgive me, Rochford, when you find some remembrances of the friendship which I once (and which I ever since) felt for you---and which on my soul I would sooner have died than have injured.

* And you will, perhaps, Rochford, yet remember me with pity, and with tenderness---if you knew what I felt at this moment (on the brink of my dissolution) you would think the man that could survive it, must be more than mortal.

The time has been when I have had some opportunities (which the world will not say I have neglected) of doing a little good---I fall, Rochford, a victim to frailty, but my life has not been marked with re-iterated crimes---the only man I ever injured was Rochford---and he was the last I would intentionally have abused.

* We find no part of this letter in the present collection, but it appears that Mr. Fortescue left Mr. Rochford half his fortune which was very considerable.

Just see that my remains are sent into
 ———shire, and interred in the family
 vault there.

Adieu---Rochford---may prosperity in
 future await you---you will require a
 great deal of happiness to counter-ba-
 lance the misery which I know must be
 felt by an injured husband.

Adieu,

AUDLEY FORTESCUE.

Wednesday morning, half past two.

I HAD scarcely finished the perusal of
 this melancholy relick (which my tears
 frequently interrupted) before a servant
 came in with a message from the phy-
 sician, desiring me instantly to attend him.

He received me at the door of the
 dying victim's apartment—"we have no
 hope—Sir—a few minutes more and all
 will be over---there seems to be at pre-
 sent a momentary interval of reason, and
 possibly the lady may have something to
 say."

I hastened to the bed-side--she breath-
 ed hard and quick—I caught her feeble
 hand—she knew me—"Oh, Rochford
 --do you come to forgive me—it may
 be a passport to the mercy of a greater
 JUDGE, before whom I am shortly to
 appear

appear—my repentance has been late—so indeed was my guilt—for my heart was not naturally vicious, and this was the first offence that common charity could not pass over—but it may shew the world what slender security virtue has, if the passions are not timely controlled.”

I made an imperfect reply, but it was sufficient to assure her of my forgiveness—she took my hand, and carrying it to her lips, faintly kissed it—“Heaven,” said she, “may have comfort still in store for you—may this be the last trial, the last misfortune!” she could no more, nature’s final effort was exhausted—a mournful silence succeeded—her eyes closed—her respiration shortened—once more she struggled faintly—and expired.

I continued some moments gazing on her pale remains—beautiful still—and on her insensate hand imprinted a parting kiss, the last offering of disappointed tenderness.

And here I am, BERTIE—a forlorn, and wretched widower—my wife lies breathless—my friend lies murdered by his own rash hand—Oh God! let me turn away from the dreadful scene!

REGINALD ROCHFORD.

T H E E N D .



